

No 1

A N
E X T R A C T
O F

John Nelson's JOURNAL;

B E I N G

An Account of God's Dealing with his Soul
from his Youth to the Forty-second year of
his Age, and his working by him :

L I K E W I S E

The Oppressions he met with from People of
different Denominations.

Written by HIMSELF.

Blessed be God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the
Father of Mercies, and the God of all comfort ; who comforteth
us in all our Tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them
which are in any trouble, by the comfort, wherewith ourselves are
comforted of God. 2 Cor. i. 3, 4.

Lord, thou hast led the Blind by a Way that he knew not.

Where shall my wond'ring Soul begin ?

How shall I all to Heav'n aspire ?

A Slave redeem'd from Death and Sin,

A Braud pluck'd from eternal Fire !

How shall I equal Triumphs raise

And sing my great Deliv'rer's praise ?

L O N D O N: Printed by R. HAWES,
And Sold at the Foundry in *Moorfields*; and at the
Rev. Mr. *Wesley's* Preaching-Houses,
in Town and Country. 1777.

Thomas Lea His Book

1787

ACT

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

T H E following sheets were written at divers times, for my own satisfaction. But about twenty years ago, when I was in the Newcastle round, I transcribed them into a book. Some of our friends saw them, and begged they might be printed ; which I refused at that time, knowing my own ignorance and inability.

However Mr. Thornton, the Lawyer, heard of it, and desired me to let him see it ; when he thought, as the Case had been already published, and had been a means of stirring up many to bear the Word, this might be of use to comfort some that were in trouble, and advised me to put it to the press.

I declined it for the present; but Mr. Thornton shewed them to several friends at Leeds, who were of the same opinion, and pressed upon me to print it immediately, which I with much reluctance agreed to: and I pray, that God may make it a blessing to all that read it; and if any receive benefit therefrom, the Lord shall have the glory; for to him alone it doth belong.

What is wrong may the Lord pardon: and that no one may be hurt by me, or any thing I have written or preached, is the sincere prayer of

Their unworthy Servant,

For Christ's Sake,

John Nelson.

SOME

S O M E
A C C O U N T, &c.

I JOHN NELSON, was born in the parish of *Birstall*, in the West-Riding of the county of *York*, in *October* 1707, and brought up a mason, as was my father before me.

When I was between nine and ten years old, I was horribly terrified with the thoughts of death and judgment, whenever I was alone: And one Sunday night I sat on the ground, by the side of my father's chair, as he was reading the twentieth chapter of the *Revelations*, when the Word came with such light and power to my soul, that it made me tremble and cry, as if a dart was shot into my heart; and I fell with my face on the floor, till the place was wet where I lay, as if water had been poured thereon. As my father proceeded, I thought I saw every thing he read about, though my eyes were shut; and the sight was so terrible, that I was about to stop my ears, that I might not hear, but I durst not; for as soon as I put my fingers to my ears, I pulled them back again. When he came to the 11th verse, the words made me cringe, and my flesh seemed to creep on my bones; where he said, *And I saw a great white throne; and him that sat thereon, from whose face the heavens and Earth fled away, and there was found no place for them: And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were*

opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of Life; and the Dead were judged out of those things that were written in the book, according to their works.

—O what a scene was opened in my mind! It was as if I had seen the Lord JESUS CHRIST sitting on his throne, with the twelve apostles below him; and a large book open at his left hand, on the throne; and as it were a bar fixed about ten paces from the throne, to which all the children of *Adam* came up; and every one as he approached opened his breast, as quick as a man could open the bosom of his shirt: On one leaf of the book was written the character of the children of God, and on the other, the character of those that should not enter into the kingdom of heaven. I thought neither the Lord nor the apostles ever said any thing, but every soul, as they came up to the bar, compared their consciences with the book, and went away to their own places; one part singing, and the other crying and howling. Those that went to the right hand were but like the stream of a brook, but the others like the flowing of a mighty river.

God hath followed me with conviction ever since I was ten years old; and whenever I had committed any known sin, either against God or man, I used to be so terrified afterwards, that I shed many a tear in private: Yet when I came to my companions, I wiped my face and went on again in sin and folly; but Oh! the hell I found in my mind when I came to be alone again, and what resolutions I made; nevertheless, when temptation came, my resolutions were as a thread of tow, that had touched the fire.

When I was about sixteen, I heard a sermon in our own church, which deprived me of rest in the night, nor durst I sin as I had before for many days. But alas! I looked the wrong way; for I watched those that were older and more learned than myself, and what they did, I thought I might safely do; so I turned back to sin and folly.—O what evil do the old
and

learned men do to those that are young and unlearned ! when their lives are corrupt, they are certainly the most accursed beings on the earth : how many times have their examples hardened my heart, and encouraged me in the broad way ! Surely they are a curse to their own children and servants, as well as their ignorant, unlearned neighbours.

When I was turned a little of sixteen, my father was taken ill, which I thought was for my wickedness : yet at that time, vile as I was, I prayed earnestly that God would spare him for the sake of my mother and the young children, and let me die in his stead ; but the Lord would not regard my prayer. Three days before he died, he said to my mother “ Trouble not thyself for me ; for I know that my peace is made with God, and he will provide for thee and the children.” I was greatly surprised at his words, wondering how he could *know* his peace was made with God.

In one of my times of trouble I was in a stable, and falling into a slumber, I dreamt that I prayed that God would make me happy ; but I thought, what will make me happy, if the Lord would do for me what I ask of him ? Then I dreamt I beheld *Jeremiah*, the prophet, standing on a large rock of stone, at the West-gate of *Jerusalem* : His countenance was grave, and with great authority he reprov'd the elders and magistrates of the city : for which they were enraged, and pulling him down, cast him on a dunghill where the Butchers poured forth the blood of their slain beasts : And I imagined I saw them tread him under their feet, but his countenance never changed, neither did he cease to cry out, *Thus saith the Lord, If ye will not repent and give glory to my name, I will bring destruction on you and your city.* He seemed so composed and so happy, while he lay on the dunghill, and they were treading him under their feet, that I said in my dream, O God, make me like *Jeremiah*.” And though but a dream, it left
such

such an impression upon me, as if I had seen it with my eyes—And since then, Thou, Lord, in a small measure, hast given me to taste of his cup.

When I was about nineteen, I found myself in great danger of falling into scandalous sins, and I prayed, I believe, twenty times for God to preserve me, and give me a wife that I might live with her to his glory. He heard my prayer, and delivered me out of many dangerous temptations; for which I praise his holy name.

The first time I ever saw my wife was at *Tonge*, where I was going to build the new church. I did not know who she was, nor where she came from; but, at first sight, I said in my mind, "That is the woman I asked of God in prayer;" and I fully determined, if I got married, I would live to his glory. But what is a resolution when made in our own strength! For though I believe God gave me the most suitable wife that I could have had, in every respect, yet for some years after we were married, I did not live to his glory, for I loved pleasure more than God; though many a time when I had been shooting a whole day, and had got the creatures I pursued, yet I was quite unhappy, and ready to break the gun in pieces, resolving never to shoot or hunt more. And I said to my wife, "I am determined to leave off this course of life, yet it is impossible if I stay here; therefore, if thou be free, I will go to Sir *Rowland Wynn's*, and see if I can get business there, or somewhere else at a distance from home." To which she gladly consented; neither of us acquainting any one with my design.

On Monday morning we parted in great love, praying one for the other. As I went from our town, I made use of *Jacob's* words which he spake to the Lord as he went to *Padanaram*; and the Lord blessed me in all my journey. I found work at *Newark on Trent*, and staid about a month: all that time the hand of God was upon me, by convicting me of my former sins; so that the sense of

his

his wrath being justly kindled against me, made me cry to him for mercy, some days forty times in the day. Then I went to *London*, and got into business the day I arrived there. Here my concern for salvation increased for some time, and I continued to read and pray when I had done my work, refusing all company; and I believe, if I had had some one to shew me the way, I should have closed in with the Lord in a saving manner. But I looked at men for example, and fell from my seriousness. The workmen cursed and abused me, because I would not drink with them, and spend my money as they did; and I bore many insults from them, without opening my mouth to speak to them again. But when they took my tools from me, and said, if I would not drink with them, I should not work while they were drinking; that provoked me, and I fought with several of them, then they let me alone. But that stifled my concern for salvation; and I left off prayer and reading in a great measure. I staid better than half a year, and had not one hour's sickness, nor did I want one day's work in all that time; so that by my hand labour, I cleared, besides maintaining myself, *twelve pounds, fifteen shillings.*

Then I came home, and fell into my former course; and I said to my wife, "I cannot live here." So I set off for *London* again, ordering her to follow me in the waggon. We both got well there, and lived in a good way (as the world call it) that is, in peace and plenty, and love to each other.

After some time, I had a sore fit of illness: then my conscience was alarmed, and I expected to die and perish body and soul in hell. O the distress I was in, not for fear of death, so much as the judgment that should follow! But the Lord rebuked the fever, and restored me to perfect health.

After residing some years in *London*, my wife had not her health, therefore we agreed, that she should take our two children and go into the country

country, and I would follow at a certain season ; accordingly I did ; but I could not rest night or day. I said I must go to *London* again. Several asked me why I would go again, since I might live at home as well as any where in the world ? My answer was, I have something to learn that I have not yet learned : but I did not know that it was the great lesson of love to God and man. When I got there, I fell to work presently, and all things prospered that I pursued ; I then began to consider what I wanted to make me happy ; for I was yet as a man in a barren wilderness, that could find no way out ; I said to myself, what can I desire that I have not ? I enjoy as good health as any man can do ; I have as agreeable a wife as I can wish for ; I am clothed as well as I can desire, I have at present more gold and silver than I have need of ; yet still I keep wandering from one part of the kingdom to another, seeking rest and cannot find it : then I cried out, O ! that I had been a cow, or a sheep ; for I looked back to see how I had spent above thirty years ; and I thought, rather than live thirty more so, I would chuse strangling. But when I considered that after such a troublesome life, I must give an account of the deeds done in the flesh before God, who knew all my thoughts, words, and actions, I cried out, O that I had never been born ; for I feared my day of grace was over, because I had made so many resolutions and had broke them all : yet I thought, I will set out once more, for I said, surely God never made man to be such a riddle to himself, and to leave him so : there must be something in religion, that I am not acquainted with, to satisfy the empty mind of man, or he is in a worse state than the beasts that perish. In all these troubles, I had none to open my mind to, but I wandered up and down in the fields alone, when I had done my work, praying as I walked, and meditating what course to take to save my soul.

I went from church to church, but found no
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case: one minister at *St. Paul's* preached about man doing his duty to God and his neighbour, and when such came to lie on a death-bed, what joy they would find in their own breast, by looking back on their well-spent life.—But that sermon had like to have destroyed my soul; for I looked back, and could not see one day in all my life, wherein I had not left undone something that I ought to have done, and had done wrong; that I was so far from having a well-spent life to reflect upon, that I saw, if one day well spent would save my soul, and if that was the terms of my salvation, I must be damned. O what a stab was that sermon to my wounded soul! It made me wish my mother's womb had been my grave. After that I heard another, wherein the preacher summed up all the christian duties: but he said, man, since the fall, could not perfectly fulfil the will of his maker; but that God required him to do all he could, and Christ would make out the rest; but if man did not do all he could, he must unavoidably perish: for he had no right to expect any interest in the merits of Christ, if he had not fulfilled his part, and done all that lay in his power. Then I thought not only me, but every soul must be damned: for I did not believe that any who had lived to years of maturity, had done all they could, and avoided all the evil they might.—Therefore I concluded, that none could be saved but little children. O what deadly physic was that sort of doctrine to my poor sick soul!

I thought I would try others; and went to hear the *Dissenters*, of divers denominations, but to no purpose. I went to the *Romans*, but was soon surfeited with their way of worship. Then I went to the *Quakers*, and prayed, that God would not suffer the blind to go out of the way, but join me to the people that worshipped him in spirit and in truth: I cared not what they were called, nor what I suffered upon earth, so that my soul might be saved at last. I believe I heard them every Sunday for three

three months ; what made me continue so long was, the expectation of some help by hearing them ; for there was one, almost at my first going, that spoke something that nearly suited the state my soul was in ; but he shewed no remedy. I had now tried all but the *Jesuits*, and I thought it was to no purpose to go to them ; so I thought I would go to church, and read and pray, whether I perish or not. But I was amazed, when I came to join in the morning prayer, to see that I had mocked my Maker all my days, by praying for things I did not expect nor desire : Then I thought none could be so ignorant as I had been, nor so base, to draw near to God with their lips and their hearts so far from him.

In the Spring Mr. *Whitefield* came into *Moorfields*, and I went to hear him : He was to me as a man that could play well on an instrument, for his preaching was pleasant to me, and I loved the man ; so that if any one offered to disturb him, I was ready to fight for him. But I did not understand him, though I might hear him for 20 times for aught I know ; yet I got some hope of mercy, so that I was encouraged to pray on, and spend my leisure hours in reading the scriptures. But sometimes, as I was reading, I thought if what I read was true, and if none are christians, but such as St. John and St. Paul describe to be God's people, I do not know one person that is a christian either in town or country : I said, if things be so, I am no more a christian than a devil ; and my hope of ever being one was very small. In this struggle I had but little sleep ; if I slept four hours out of twenty-four, I thought it a great deal ; sometimes I started as if I was falling into some horrible place ; at other times I dreamed that I was fighting with Satan, and when I awaked, I was sweating and as fatigued as if I had really been fighting. Yet all this time I was as capable of working both in understanding and strength, as ever I was

in my life ; and this was an encouragement to me. In all this time I did not open my mind to any person either by word or letter ; but I was like a wandering bird, cast out of the nest, till Mr. *John Wesley* came to preach his first sermon in *Moorfields*. O that was a blessed morning to my soul ! As soon as he got upon the stand, he stroked back his hair, and turned his face towards where I stood, and I thought fixed his eyes on me : his countenance struck such an awful dread upon me, before I heard him speak, that it made my heart beat like the pendulum of a clock ; and when he did speak, I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me : when he had done, I said, this man can tell the secrets of my heart ; he hath fully described the disease of my soul ; but he hath not left me there, for he hath shewed the remedy, even the blood of Jesus. Then was my soul filled with consolation thro' hope, that God for Christ's sake would save me ; neither did I doubt in such a manner any more, till within twenty-four hours of the time, when the Lord wrote a pardon on my heart. Tho' this was a little after Midsummer that I heard him, and it was three weeks after Michaelmas before I found the true peace of God ; yet I continued to hear as often as I could, but not to neglect my work. I had many flashes of love under the Word, when I was at private prayer, and at the table of the Lord ; but they were short, and often some fore temptations followed.

Now all my acquaintance set upon me, to persuade me not to go too far in religion, lest it should unfit me for my business, and so bring poverty and distress on my family : and said they wished I had never heard Mr. *Wesley*, for they were afraid it would be the ruin of me. I told them I had reason to bless God that ever he was born, for by hearing him I was sensible that my business in this world was to get well out of it ; and as for my trade, health, wisdom, and all things in the world, they were no blessings to me any farther than as so many instruments to help me by the grace of God to work out my salvation. Then they

said they were very sorry for me, and should be glad to knock Mr. *Wesley's* brains out, for he would be the ruin of many families, if he was allowed to live, and go on as he did. Some of them said they would not hear him preach for 50*l*. But I told them I had reason to bless God that ever I heard him, and I intended to hear him as often as I could, for I believed him to be God's messenger; and if I did not seek to be born again, and experience that spiritual birth, I could not enter into the kingdom of heaven, which was the doctrine he preached.

A little after Michaelmas I had many trials again, and passion got advantage over me: then I thought it was to no purpose for me to strive any longer, for every one endeavoured to provoke me, and I could not bear it. About this time, I was going out of the *Park* into *Westminster*, where was a soldier with his arms about him, as he was coming from guard, who began to talk to some other soldiers and a company of Welch women. I was but a few paces from him: the tenor of his discourse was as follows: " You know what manner of man I was some months ago; and none of you pitied me then, tho' I was going headlong to the devil; for I was a drunkard and a swearer; I was a whore-monger and a fighter; a sabbath-breaker and a gamester; nay I know no sin but I was guilty of either in word or deed; so that it is a miracle that my neck was not brought to the gallows, and my soul to hell long ago: at that time I durst not think of death; for I had no reason to think of ought but hell; therefore I was desperate in wickedness, and did not put a restraint on any lust or appetite: till one day, as I was coming out of the country by *Kennington Common*, Mr. *John Wesley* was going to preach, and I thought I would hear what he had to say; for I had heard many learned and wise men say he was beside himself; but when he began to speak, his words made me tremble. I thought he spoke to no one but me, and I durst not look up, for I imagined all the people were looking at me; and was ashamed to shew my face, expecting
God

God would make me a public example, either by letting the earth open and swallow me up, or by striking me dead : but before Mr. *Wesley* concluded his sermon he cried out, *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.* I said, if that be true I will turn to God to-day. I immediately went home, and began to read and pray, keeping out of all bad company for about a fortnight, and hearing Mr. *Wesley* as often as I could : but my old companions missed me, and came to see what was the matter : when they found me reading the bible, they cursed and swore, and dragged me away into an ale-house, where I sat down and began to reason with them ; but O how dangerous it is to encounter with Satan on his own ground ; for as I talked I began to drink a little, which got into my head, when I quarrelled with them and fought ; and as I was going to my quarters, a lewd woman met me, and I had not power to resist her, but was again taken captive by the devil. Nevertheless when I had slept, I was so terrified, I thought I never dare pray more, or expect mercy. I was determined, however, to hear Mr. *Charles Wesley* that night, and by his preaching I had some hopes that my day of grace was not over : then I began to pray again, and read the scriptures : and one Sunday morning I called at *Whitehall chapel*, where the sacrament was going to be administered ; I went to the table with trembling limbs and a heavy heart ; but no sooner had I received, than I found power to believe that Jesus Christ had shed his blood for me, and that God for his sake had forgiven my offences : then was my heart filled with love to God and man ; and since then sin hath not had dominion over me."

These sayings of the soldier were a blessing to me, for they sunk deep into my mind, and made me cry more earnestly, that God would work the same change in my heart. I found my soul much refreshed at the

sacrament on the Sunday after, and mightily encouraged under Mr. *Wesley's* sermon in the afternoon, all the week after I felt an awful sense of God rest upon me; and I had a great watchfulness over my words, and several short visits of love, having great hope that I had got a complete victory over my besetting sin: but passion was yet too strong for me, for that night I fell again, and cried out immediately, "I am undone, I have lost all hopes of mercy." All the night I was as if I had been given up to Satan. In the morning, one prayed with me, but I found no answer; for my heart was as hard as a rock of stone.

When I went back to my lodging at noon, dinner was ready; and the gentlewoman said, "Come sit down, you have need of your dinner, for you have eaten nothing to-day:" but when I looked on the meat, I said, "Shall such a wretch as I devour the good creatures of God in the state I am now in! No, I deserve to be thrust into hell." I then went into my chamber, shut the door, and fell down on my knees, crying, *Lord, save or I perish.* When I had prayed till I could pray no more, I got up and walked to and fro, being resolved I would neither eat nor drink, till I had found the kingdom of God. I fell down to prayer again, but found no relief; got up and walked again; then tears began to flow from my eyes, like great drops of rain, and I fell on my knees a third time; but now I was as dumb as a beast, and could not put up one petition, if it would have saved my soul. I kneeled before the Lord some time, and saw myself a criminal before the judge; then I said, "Lord, thy will be done, damn or save." That moment Jesus Christ was as evidently set before the eye of my mind, as crucified for my sins, as if I had seen him with my bodily eyes; and in that instant my heart was set at liberty from guilt and tormenting fear, and filled with a calm and serene peace. I could then say, without all dread or fear, "Thou art my Lord and my God." Now did I begin to sing that part of the 12th chapter of *Isaiah*, *O Lord I will*

I will praise thee ; tho' thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away from me, and thou comfortest me : behold, God is my salvation ; I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song ; and he also is become my salvation.—My heart was filled with love to God and every soul of man ; and next to my wife and children, my mother, brethren and sisters, my greatest enemies had an interest in my prayers ; and I cried, “ O Lord, give me to see my desire on them ; let them experience thy redeeming love.”

In the afternoon I opened the book where it said, *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood,* with which I was so affected, that I could not read for weeping. That evening, under Mr. Wesley's sermon, I could do nothing but weep, and love, and praise God for sending his servant into the fields to shew me the way of salvation. All that day I neither ate or drank any thing ; for before I found peace to my soul, the hand of God was so heavy upon me, that I refused to eat ; and after I had found peace, I was so filled with the manna of redeeming love, that I had no need of the bread that perisheth for that season.

At night when I came home, the gentlewoman of the house where I had lodged a long time, told me to provide a lodging, for I must stay there no longer than that one night ; for her husband was afraid some mischief would come either on them or me, with so much praying and fuss as I made about religion. I told them I would come on Wednesday night, and pay what I owed them, and fetch my cloaths away, praying that God might reward them for the kindness they had shewed me ; for I had had a fever in the house ; and surely no-one could shew more compassion to a stranger than they did to me at that time.

On Wednesday night (according to my promise) I went to my old lodging, and paid what I owed there, and got my cloaths ready to bring away ; but having forgot something, I slept back into my room to look for it : In the mean time, the man said to his wife, “ Suppose John should be right, and we wrong.”

wrong, it will be a sad thing to turn him out of doors." When I came down, the woman stood at the door, and said, "You shall not go out of this house to night." I said, "What will you neither let me go nor stay?" She replied, "My husband is not willing you should go; for he saith, if God hath done any thing more for you than for us, he would have you shew us how we may find the same mercy." So I sat down with them, and told them of God's dealing with my soul, and prayed with them; soon after which they both went to hear Mr. *Wesley* preach, when the woman was made partaker of the same grace; and I hope to meet them both in heaven.

On the Saturday following, the dragon stood ready to devour my new-born soul; for my master's chief foreman came to me, saying, "*John Nelson*, you must look after such and such men to-morrow; there is a piece of work to be done with all speed, for the Lord of the Exchequer will be here on a particular day, by which time it must be compleated." "Sir, I replied, you have forgot yourself; to-morrow is the Sabbath." He said he knew that as well as me; but the king's business required haste, and it was common to work on the Sunday for his majesty when any thing was upon a finish. I told him I would not work upon the sabbath for any man in England, except it was to quench fire, or something that required the same immediate help. He said, *Religion* had made me a *rebel* against the King. I answered, "No, Sir, *it* hath made me a *better subject* than ever I was before; but I told him, the greatest enemies the king had were the Sabbath-breakers, swearers, drunkards and whore-mongers; for these pull down God's judgments upon both king and country. Then he said, if I would not obey him, I should lose my business. I replied, "I cannot help it; tho' it may be ten pounds out of my way to be turned out of my work at this time of the year, I will not wilfully offend God; for I would much rather want bread; nay, I would rather see my wife and children beg their bread barefooted to heaven, than ride in a coach to hell." He swore, if I
went

went on a while I should be as mad as *Whitefield*; and said, What hast thou done, that thou needest make so much ado about salvation? I always took thee to be as honest a man as any I have in the work, and could have trusted thee with gold. I answered, so you might, and not have lost one penny by me. He said, "What hast thou killed somebody, or committed adultery, that thou art so much afraid of being damned?" I replied, "God takes the will for the deed; and tho' clear from those acts, I deserved to be damned tenfold for other crimes; for if I sin wilfully against God, after he hath shewed me such mercy, I may expect to have the hottest hell." He said, "I have a worse opinion of thee now than ever." I replied, "Master, I have the odds of you; for I have a much worse opinion of myself, than you can have."

At night when I went to receive my wages, he asked me if I was still obstinate? I answered, "I am determined not to break the sabbath; for I will run the hazard of wanting bread here, before I would run the hazard of wanting water hereafter." He said, *Wesley* had made a fool of me, and I should beggar my family. I had a glorious sabbath that day; for God blessed my soul wonderfully, both under the Word, and at the sacrament.

I went on Monday morning to the Exchequer, to take care of my tools, not expecting to work there any more. But God hath the hearts of all men in his own hand; for he, that was so wroth with me on the Saturday now gave me good words, and bid me set the men to work. From that time he carved better for me than ever before; neither did he set to work any man on the sabbath as he had said he would. So I see it is good to obey God, and cast our care upon him, and he will order all things well; for if we refuse to join with the wicked, it will be a restraint to them.

In the time of all my convictions, I never let my wife know of my trouble: But now I could not eat my morsel alone; for I wrote to her and all my

relations, to seek the same mercy that I had found : However, all I writ seemed as idle tales to most of them.

Some weeks after, three gentlemen (*professed Deists*) fell upon me, and reasoned with me for about an hour ; but the Lord put such words in my mouth, that made them say, *Wesley* had taught me his own lesson ; and I was sunk so deep into *Enthusiasm*, that I was past recovery. Nevertheless I see it is bad for weak believers to reason with men of corrupt principles ; for after some time the enemy brought their words to my mind, and began to reason with me in this manner, " Suppose *Jesus Christ* should be an impostor [*as these men say he is*] thou art lost for ever." O ! the distress I was in for a short time. But I made a stop in the streight and said, " If *Jesus Christ* be not the Son of God and my Saviour, I will be damned, for I will have no other." Then the cloud broke, and my soul was so filled with love, that I thought, if all the world, and the devils in hell, were to set on me, they could not make me disbelieve that *Jesus Christ* is very and true God, and my redeemer.

I daily reprov'd all that sinned in the work where I was ; so that none of them would swear in my presence. But having no christian friend to converse with, I kept close to God in prayer, and read the bible at all opportunities, and heard one of the *Mr. Wesleys* every Sunday, stirring up many to go to hear them : And tho' I had many trials, I was so kept by the power of God, that nothing disturbed my peace again for some time.

Once, however, as I was reading in the bible, a gentlewoman (that lived in part of the house) brought me a book, and said, " You are often reading the bible : if you please, I will lend you this book : My mother, she added, took delight in reading therein." I thanked her and began to read. For some pages it was agreeable to many things I had experienced in the time of conviction ; but it was not at all correspondent to my experience, as to my conversion ;
pleading

pleading for sin after conversion, to keep the saints humble, and making God the author of all sin.

Then the enemy began to reason with me, that I ought not to reprove any more for sin. From that time my love began to cool unto God and man, and my zeal for the salvation of others abated; and tho' the more I read the worse I was in my own soul, yet I was tempted to read it through,

Before I read in that book, I did not know there was a man in the world who held such an opinion; for in all my trials, I believed every threatening in the bible was against the disobedient, every promise to those that turn to God. But now I was tempted to think I was safe, *do whatever I would*: Yet I still prayed, "Lord, let me die rather than live to sin against thee."

I had never spoke to Mr. *Wesley* in my life, nor conversed with any experienced man, about religion. I longed to find one to talk with; but I sought in vain, for I could find none.

One time as I was reasoning about what I had read, I opened the bible on these words, *If any man lack wisdom let him ask of GOD, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not*: "O Lord, what I know not, do thou teach me." And I thought I would wait upon the Lord in fasting and prayer, till he revealed his will to me: and I did for several weeks fast from Thursday night to Saturday morning at eight o'clock, spending the time I was off my work, either upon my knees at prayer, or in searching the scriptures; and before I opened the bible I prayed that God would open my understanding to comprehend what I read. I think the first scripture that was applied to me was, *As ye have received the LORD JESUS, so walk in him*: Then I remembered what state my soul was in, when I first received his Spirit in my heart; that it was swelled with love to every soul, and I could pray for all my enemies as well as myself; but this book had turned me out of that blessed state

state I was in, by setting me to reason about opinions that I never heard of in my life, till several weeks after I had received the love of Christ: Therefore I said in my mind, let it be right or wrong, it is not necessary for salvation; I found the Lord to be my saviour, before I knew there was a man in the world of that opinion; and before I read of it, I loved both God and man better than I have done since, and was more useful in reproving and doing good than I am now. I then prayed that God would give me that simplicity and godly sincerity, that I walked in when he first revealed Christ in my heart. And he answered me in a wonderful manner; so that my tongue was loosed to reprove, and my heart again enlarged to pray for every soul of man.

I now went on my way rejoicing for some days; and had so much of the Lord all the day long, that my soul seemed to breathe its life in God as naturally as my body breathed life in the common air. But one day I reprov'd a man for swearing, when he told me he was *predestinated* to it, and he did not trouble himself about it at all, for if he was one of the elect he should be saved; but if not, all he could do, would not alter God's decree; so that all I said to him, seemed to take no more hold of him, than if I had thrown a leather ball against a rock. I thought God was very good to me, who kept me ignorant of those opinions till I knew my part in the all-atoning blood; for I feared if I heard such things, in the time of my distress, it would have been the destruction of my body and soul. Yet I durst not say any thing against that opinion, but wished I had some experienced man to converse with about it, for I was brought into heaviness again by reasoning, but alas! not one could I find.

I still continued to wait on the Lord, with fasting and prayer; and one day of fast, being greatly perplexed, I opened the book with prayer on these words, *As I live saith the LORD, I have no pleasure in*
in

in the death of a sinner. Then my heart was set at liberty ; and I cried out, " Glory be to thee, O Lord, for thou hast given me thy word and thy oath and thy spirit in my heart to bear witness, that thou art no respecter of persons."

Now I found such a desire for the salvation of souls, that I hired one of the men to go and hear Mr. *Wesley* preach, who hath since told me, it was the best thing for both him and his wife, that ever man did for them.

All that hard winter, I still fasted from Thursday night to Saturday morning ; and gave away the meat, that I should have eaten, to the poor, spending my time in praying and reading the scripture.

About this time, several came to see me, who finding me at work, looked at each other like men amazed, and said they were glad to see me so well. I told them I had not had one day's sickness for six months. They said, " A man that worked at the treasury with you, told us, you had been hearing that false prophet, *Wesley* ; and he had made you go mad, and incapable of working." " Well, said I, here is my master can testify, that I have not lost one day's work this half year, nor was I ever better able to do any work in all my life ; but I have heard Mr. *Wesley*, and have reason to bless God for it, for he is God's messenger for my good." Some words that I spoke seemed to stick in them ; so that I hope *Satan* will lose ground by that false and ill-grounded report.

The enemy, however, now came upon me with other temptations, and prepared such instruments to destroy my soul, that I feared I should be overcome, and perish at last ; for wherever I went, the snare was laid for me, and my soul was so harrassed with wicked dreams, that I have often awaked, and found my pillow wet with tears, after thinking that the enemy would reason with me about some sin I had committed in the dream, but this drove me more to prayer, and shewed me my corrupt nature in such a light, that I abhorred myself, and thought, the Lord
never

never undertook to save one more like the devil in nature than I was; and it was often impressed on my mind, that if I held out to the end, I should have great reason to sing louder in the Redeemer's praise, than any other soul in heaven.

I would fain have known whether any one that had the grace of God in him, was tempted day and night as I was; but my business being altogether at the court end of the town, I had no one to open my mind to. Then I took up the bible, and after praying, happened on these words of St. James, *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of Glory, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

One night, after a day of fasting, I dreamt, that I was in *Yorkshire*, in my working cloaths, going home; and as I went by *Paul Champion's*, I heard a mighty cry, as of a great multitude of people in distress; and I saw in my dream, the large court behind *John Rhodes's* as full of people as they could stand by one another. All on a sudden, they began to scream and tumble one over another; I asked what was the matter? and they told me *Satan* was let loose among them, and begged of me to get out of the way, for he was coming; but I said, "By the grace of God, I will not turn to the right hand or to the left for him." Then I thought I saw him in the shape of a red bull, that run through the people, as a beast runs thro' the standing corn, yet did not offer to gore any of them, but made directly at me, as if he would run his horns into my heart; then I cried out, "Lord, help me!" and immediately caught him by the horns, and twisted him on his back, setting my right foot on his neck, in the presence of a thousand people; and I bid them cry to Jesus, assuring them, that what they had seen me do, he would give them to do. When I awoke I was in a sweat, and my body was as much fatigued, as if I had been hard at labour, but my soul was filled with joy.

A little after this, as I was reading the scriptures,

a letter came to me : I saw it was not from my wife : Then I said, "I fear it is bad news." Upon opening it, one stroke came after another : My daughter was dead, whom I formerly idolized : My son was so ill his life was despaired of : my wife had fallen from a horse and was lamed : My father-in-law was dead : and my mother sick. It was brought to my mind that I had made a free-will offering of my body and soul, wife and children, and all that was near and dear to me, to the Lord, when I was at the sacrament : and now how shall I bear it, when the Lord is taking them at my hand. I went to prayers for those that were behind ; and found my heart wholly resigned to the will of God. Then it came to me, *Let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou me.* I began to read again, and the people of the house where I was scolded at me, because I did not weep, wring my hands, and stamp as they did, at the loss of a child, saying, I was a hard-hearted father. I then replied, "I cannot tell how to chuse what is best : but God cannot err."

The *May* following I was ordered to take some men and go to Lord *Onslow's* near *Guildford* in *Surry*, to do a piece of work that would last all summer. This was heavy tidings ; for I thought I was but weak in faith, and should be deprived of hearing Mr. *Wesley*, and have no one to converse with. I desired to be excused, but all in vain. I believe I should have left my master, but I thought it would be unjust to leave him in such a busy time, when he had kept me employed all that hard winter. However, it made me cry to the Lord to go with me, and protect me from both my inward and outward enemies ; and he was gracious to me, enabling me to reprove all that sinned in my presence ; so that a young gentleman said to some of the men, "Of what religion is your foreman ? Is he a *Baptist*, or is he a *Quaker* ?" They replied, "No Sir, he is of the *Church of England*." He said, "He may tell you so ; but he is no *Churchman* : For you can hardly speak at
C table;

but he is reprov'ing us ; and if he say but one word, we cannot persuade him to drink one glass more of liquor. I overheard him, though he did not see me ; and I said, " Sir, you give a bad character to the *Church of England*, if you say, -a man cannot be a *Churchman*, that reproves others for cursing and swearing, and refuses to drink to excess."

One day the *Speaker* of the hon. *House of Commons* came to visit my Lord ; and taking a view of the work, he asked me many questions about it, which I resolved as well as I could. He said, " This is a fine house, and a fine estate of land about it ! But what will it signify ? For a piece of land, six feet long and three feet broad, will fit me shortly." He then fetched a deep sigh, and went away, and walked alone among the trees.

I had now conversation with some *Baptists* in *Guildford* : But alas ! their religion lay in notions ; I found no true experience amongst them. I reasoned with them about the necessity of the *new-birth* ; and contended with many of other sects, that all religion, without the life of Christ manifest in us, would profit us nothing at last.

I heard that some, who were called serious people, said I was a dangerous man to converse with ; and others shunned my company after I had talked with them. Then I thought I would leave off reprov'ing and reasoning, for I made myself to be abhorred. I cried out, " Lord, shew me what is thy will in this matter ;" and laid me down in great heaviness. That night I dreamt, I saw a tall young person in a white vesture, whose face shone like the sun, standing at the foot of my bed, who said unto me, " Arise and praise the Lord." I thought a great light shone round my bed, by which I saw myself polluted with loathsome filth, from the top of my head to the sole of my foot ; and I said, " How can such an unclean creature shew forth the praises of God ?" Then I thought he shewed me a river as clear as chrystal, with fine green grass growing at the bottom thereof, in which he bid me wash

wash and be clean. I thought I went at his bidding ; and as soon as my feet were dipped in the water, the filth dropped from my whole body, nevertheless, the water was not fouled by it, at which I was surprized ; but when I came to the middle of the river, it was deeper than I was high, and I knew I could not swim, yet my soul was so filled with the sense of God's love, that my head was kept above water. I then thought I spread my hands, like a man that is going to swim ; and as I laboured to swim, I rose up out of the water, and was carried as on the wings of an eagle above the clouds ; and cried *Hosannah to the king of heaven*. And tho' asleep I sung so loud, that I awaked the people of the house. I now resolved to reprove again, and seemed to do it with more authority than before, and my words began to stick in some, and caused them to reform their lives.

About Michaelmas I came back to *London* ; and several, that used to attend Mr. *Wesley's* preaching at *Kennington* common and *Moorfields*, who had also joined with him in the *Foundery*, came to see me ; at which I was much surprized, having no correspondence with them, any farther than speaking one to another, as we went from place to place to hear him preach. At their first coming, I thought it was the thing I longed for, often wishing that I had some christian friends to converse with ; and now they are come. They said, they heard I was come to town, and the love they bore me, made them come to see me. I said to them, " I thank you ; pray how does my good friend Mr. *Wesley* do ? " They replied " We do not know : poor dear man, he is wandering in the dark, but we hope our Saviour will open his eyes, and let him see, that he is a *blind leader of the blind*." Their words were as a sword run into my liver ; and made me cry out, " Lord, have mercy upon him ! What is the matter with him ? " They answered, " Poor dear man, he is under the *law*, and does not know the privilege of the *gospel* himself ; therefore he preacheth *law* and *works* only for salvation."

I said, then he is strangely altered since I left *London*; for then he preached *repentance* towards God, and *faith* in our Lord Jesus; teaching the necessity of both as clearly from scripture, as any man in *England* could, and shewing the fruits of faith as plain as is possible for any man to do; and I found his word to be more blessed to me, than any man's that I ever heard in my life." They told me that I had never heard the gospel in my life, except I had heard the *Brethren*, that preached in *Fetter-lane*; for they were the men that were come to lead them into *true stillness*." I said, "What do you mean by *true stillness*? They replied, "It is to cease from our own works, such as fasting and prayer, reading the bible, and running to church and sacrament; and wholly to rely on the blood and wounds of the *Lamb*." I said, "I do not know that I ever heard either of the Mr. *Wesleys* bid any man trust in prayer, or reading, going to sacrament, or giving of alms, for salvation, either in whole or in part." But they answered, "Why doth he teach a man to do these things, if they are not to be saved by them." I returned, "If I understand Mr. *Wesley* right, he only speaks of them as Christ and his apostles speak of them, that is, to wait in them as a beggar waits for a morsel at a man's door. I never spake to Mr. *Wesley* in my life; therefore I know not what he believes any farther than by his preaching." They told me, that most of the people, who had followed him before I left *London*, had forsaken him, and become *happy sinners* now; and wished I would go and hear the *Brethren*, for Mr. *Wesley* was only a *John Baptist* to go before, and prepare them for the *Brethren* to build up. They said, "If you go to hear him, he will bring you into bondage; and you will never be happy 'till you are free from the *law*; for we were never happy till we left him and went to hear dear Mr. *Molitor*; and till then we were under the *law*." I said, "Pray, were you not converted before you left Mr. *Wesley*?" They replied, "Yes, we had gone thro' a great deal of trouble, and found great peace and joy, knowing our

our sins were forgiven ; but when we heard Mr. *M*— we found we were yet under the *law* ; for he shew- ed the privilege of the *gospel*, and we found we had not such a privilege : for if we broke the law in any little matter we were quite unhappy ; or if we neglected to pray, or missed a sermon or two, then we were uneasy : but now we are happy, for the *Lamb* hath done all for us." I said, tho' he hath done his part, yet the apostle teaches us to work out our sal- vation with fear and trembling ; and we are bid to pray always and search the scriptures. And St. *Paul* fasted often, and kept his body in subjection, lest when he had preached to others, himself should be a castaway : but you are become wiser than the apos- tle, and have got another gospel ; tho' he saith if he or an angel from heaven should preach another gos- pel, let him be accursed. I am afraid you are de- ceived, and are seeking a happiness that is separated from holiness : if so, you are led away by a deceiving spirit ; for if you can commit sin, can break the righteous law of God, and still continue happy, with- out any conviction that God is offended with you, your consciences are seared as with a hot iron." They said, " You are a poor unhappy man, and as blind as Mr. *Wesley* ; and left me without either praying with me or for me.

When I came to reason about what they had said, and to compare it with the words of our Lord and his apostles, I saw that their scheme of salvation was as contrary to that of Christ, as darkness is to light. This drove me to prayer, and made me double my diligence in reading the bible.

In a few days after, two more, that were a little ac- quainted with me, came to see me. I asked them, how Mr. *Wesley* was ? they said, they did not know, for they did not hear him now. I returned, " Why do you not ?" They replied, " He denieth the faith of the gospel." I said, " I am sorry for it ; but I hope you are only wrong informed." Then they answered, " We have heard ourselves." I replied, " What do you call the faith of the gospel?" They

“said *Predestination* and *Election*.” I told them, I thought that was not the faith of the gospel; but it was rather for every one to believe in his heart, that he is a fallen spirit, by nature a child of wrath, and by practice an heir of hell; and that the eternal Son of God, out of love to me, a poor helpless and hell-deserving creature, did lay his glory by, and for my sake, did fulfil all righteousness, at last giving his body for my body, and his soul for my soul; and that God, for the sake of his obedience and blood-shedding, hath forgiven all my sins. I said, according to the light I have, this is the faith of the gospel; and he that is partaker of this faith, hath received the spirit of power, of love, and a sound mind; power to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live a godly, righteous, and sober life. I added, “Pray under whom was you converted?” They both replied, under Mr. *Charles Wesley*. I said, “Did he *then* preach what you *now* call the faith of the gospel?” — They replied, No. “Did God then reveal that to you to be the faith of the gospel, as soon as he wrote pardon on our hearts?” They said, “No; when we were in our first love, we believed as Mr. *Wesley* believes; but now we see better and hope his eyes will be opened shortly.” I said, I fear yours are become dim: for I think you are more light and unwatchful than you used to be; and you own you have lost your first love. O remember Christ bids you repent and do your first works, or he will remove your candlestick.” But they told me, do what they would, they could not finally fall. I answered, that as far as I could learn by their words and behaviour, they were already fallen: and I wished they did not make a Christ of their opinions; for tho’ I allow, many good men hold those opinions, yet I judge, all that were converted under the two Mr. *Wesley*’s, were at first filled with love to every man, and a perfect hatred to all sin, and were inspired with a zeal for God’s glory, and the welfare of all mankind.—“Was not this your state once?”

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They owned it was, till they heard Mr. *Savoyers*; and it was by him they saw into the *electing* love of God. I replied, "I fear you have sinned against light and love; and instead of going back to the Lord, by true repentance, and seeking a fresh pardon in the blood of Christ, you have been gadding about to seek new opinions: you are gone out of the high way of holiness, and have now got into the devil's pinfold: you are not seeking to perfect holiness in the fear of God, but are resting in opinions, that give you liberty to live after the flesh: and if you continue so to live, you are safe in his hold, out of which you will be brought to the slaughter." They told me I was as stupid as Mr. *Wesley*. I replied, *Satan* had preached that doctrine to me before they did; and God had armed me against both him and them. Then they left me in my blind estate, as they called it; and I prayed, that I might never turn out of the way that God had called me into.

On *Sunday* I had the blessed opportunity of hearing Mr. *John Wesley* once more; and his word was precious food to my soul. Then I blessed the Lord, that had still kept his servant as an iron pillar in the same spirit in which I left him; but I observed, a great part of the congregation were strangers to me, for many of the old hearers were gone, and others come in. When I found that some had turned to the *Germans*, and some to the *Predestinarians*, I said, "O Lord, I will praise thee, for thou dost all things well: Thou by thy providence didst send me out of town, when the enemy was renting thy flock to pieces, and thereby thy servant hath escaped the snare."

A few weeks after I was at *St. Paul's*, where Mr. *John Wesley* also was; and I contrived to walk with him after sacrament; for I had often wished I could speak with him, therefore I seized this opportunity: So we continued in discourse all the way from *St. Paul's* to the farther end of *Upper Moorfields*; and

it was a blessed conference to me. When we parted, he took hold of my hand, and looking me full in the face, bid me take care I did not quench the spirit. I had not such an opportunity again while I staid in *London*, either with him or his brother; but I kept close to God by fasting and prayer; and the Lord helped me thro' many trials.

One night after I had been delivered from grievous temptations, my soul was filled with such a sense of God's love, as made me weep before him. In the night I dreamed, I was in *Yorkshire*, going from *Gomersal-hill* top to *Cleck-beaton*; and about the middle of the lane, I thought I saw *Satan* coming to meet me in the shape of a tall black man, and the hair of his head like snakes: But I thought I was not afraid at all; and I said, "Stand by me, O Lord, and I will not turn to the right hand or to the left;" yet I thought I would not stand to fight with him as I used to do: When he came within about five paces of me, he stood; but I went on, ript open my cloaths, and shewed him my naked breast, saying, "See HERE is the blood of CHRIST." Then I thought he fled from me as fast as a hare could run. I was still attacked by the *Moravians* on one side, and the *Presbyterians* on the other; but the Lord enabled me to stop their mouths, and to shew them that they had lost their first love: yet they seemed to be hardened, and past all conviction; and the more I read the scriptures, the more I was confirmed they were fallen into carnal security; which made me pray more earnestly, that God would preserve me from all the snares of the Devil.

About ten days before Christmas, I went to *St. Paul's*, and while I was at the communion table, I felt such an awful sense of God rest upon me, that my heart was like melting wax before him; and all my prayer was, "Thy will be done; thy will be done!" I was so dissolved into tears of love, that I could scarce take the bread; and after I had received, it was impressed on my mind, "I must go into
Yorkshire

Yorkshire, directly." But I said in myself, " If I do, it will be ten pounds out of my way." I had determined to go at *May-day*; but I thought to stay for the sake of money would be wrong, when I believed it was the will of God I should go. So I packed up my cloaths and set out. I found much of the Lord's presence all the way I went; but I had no more thought of preaching than I had of eating fire.

When I got home, I was greatly disappointed; for I expected to find many of my relations converted, as I understood they attended Mr. *Ingham's* preaching. But when I told them what it was to be converted, they said they never heard of such a thing in their lives. I told them, I knew those things by happy experience. But they begged, I would not tell any one that my sins were forgiven; for no one would believe me; and they should be ashamed to shew their faces in the street. I said, I should not be ashamed to tell what God had done for my soul, if I could speak loud enough for all the men in the world to hear me at once. My mother said, my head was turned. I replied, " Yes, and my heart too, I thank the Lord." My wife told me, she was ashamed to put her head out of doors, for every one was talking about me, and upbraiding her with my sayings; and she wished I had staid at *London*; for she could not live with me, if I went on as I did: for which reason, she desired, that I would leave off abusing my neighbours, or go back to *London*. I told her, I did not care what all the people could say: for I was determined to reprove any one that sinned in my presence. Then she cried, and said, I did not love her so well as I used to do. I replied, " Yes, I love thee better than ever I did in my life: and thou hast no reason to dispute my love; for I have been careful to provide for thee, whether I was at home or abroad; and we have been happy in each other upwards of twelve years; but if thou seek for redemption in the blood of Christ, we shall be

be ten times happier than ever." She then said, "Nay, my happiness with thee is over; for according to thy words, I am a child of the devil, and thou a child of God." Then she wept and said, "I cannot live with thee." I said, "Why so? Thou shalt never want while I am able, by honest endeavours to provide for thee. Nay, I continued, if thou wilt not go to heaven with me, I will do the best I can for thee; only I will not go to hell with thee for company: But I believe, God will hear my prayer, and convert thy soul, and make thee a blessed companion for me to heaven." After this my wife began to be concerned about the salvation of her soul.

A few days after I got home, *David Taylor* came to preach in our town, in *Mr Ingham's* society, when I went to hear him: and a dry morsel his sermon was.—Several that were acquainted with him followed me, and wanted to know how I liked the discourse. I was backward to tell them: But they pressed hard on me, and said, "Do you not think he is as good a preacher as *Mr. Wesley*?" I said, "There is no comparison between his preaching and *Mr. Wesley's*: He hath not staid long enough in the large room at *Jeru'salem*." After they had been gone some time, they came again to ask what I meant? I said, "He is not endued with power from on high." They went and related to him what I said; and he told me since, that if I had been present, he could have stabbed me: Yet he could not rest till he went to hear *Mr. Wesley* at *London*. Then he found what I said was true; and he came down to *Sheffield* and into *Derbyshire*, preaching what he called *Wesley's* doctrine, and awaked and converted many scores of people, till the *Germans* got to him, and made him deny the law of God; then he became again as salt without savour.

I went afterwards to a meeting of *Mr. Ingham's*, where one read in an old book for near an hour; then sung an hymn, and read a form of prayer. I told them, that way would never convert sinners; and began

began to relate some of my experience ; and several were struck with convictions while I was speaking ; some of whom are witnesses of the same grace, that God shewed me.

In a little time, all I said was noised abroad ; and people of all denominations came to dispute with me. As soon as I came home from work, my house was filled with people, which made my wife uneasy ; for she could do no work, and did not yet believe what I said was true.

Generally when I came in and sat down, some one would ask me a question, and others would begin to dispute with me, while others stood to hear.

When any began to cavil, I commonly asked, what *church* they belonged to : and if they said, the *church of England* ; then I replied, " Do you know your sins forgiven ? " Several said, " No, nor ever expect to know it in this world. " Then I said, " You are no members of the *church of England*, if you have not a full trust and confidence, that God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Read the homilies of the church, and you will see what I say is true. " I used to have the bible and common prayer-book by me ; and I shewed them the articles of the church, saying, " You deny inspiration ; and the church you profess to belong to, says, *Before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his spirit, no good works can be done.* " So if the church speak right, you must be inspired by the spirit of Christ to enable you to bring forth good fruit, or you must be the fuel of hell. And how dare you pray to have your thoughts cleansed by the inspiration of God's holy spirit, if you do not believe there is any such thing to be attained in this world ? O ! do not mock God any more, by asking for things with your mouths, when you do not believe in your hearts he will grant them. But one said he had been with a very learned clergyman of a neighbouring church, and he told him, there was no such thing to be attained in this life. I said, " I think you have mistaken him, for I was at that church

church last Sunday, and heard him declare all I have said to you." He said, " I was there and heard no such thing mentioned." I replied, " No ! did you not hear him affirm, that God had given power and commandment to his ministers, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution of their sins ? And he farther declared, that God pardoneth and absolveth all those, that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his gospel. Therefore it is plain, you never did repent, or unfeignedly believe the gospel ; if God has not pardoned and absolved you from your sins. Else both he and all that are in priest's orders in England, are false witnesses before God and man. And how many times have you besought God to give you true repentance ; and to forgive you all your sins, negligences and ignorances : and to endue you with the grace of his holy spirit, that you might amend your ways according to his holy word ? And now you say there is no such thing ! tho' you may remember Mr. R——s said, " Let us beseech God to grant us true repentance, and his holy spirit, that those things may please him, which we do at this present ; and that the rest of our lives may be pure and holy."

By these discourses, many were pricked to the heart, and durst not offer the sacrifice of fools any more ; but prayed in good earnest for God to pardon their sins, and to answer them in the joy of their hearts.

When any said they were of the *church of Scotland* ; I asked them if they did not know their sins forgiven ? They told me that they did not ; nay, farther, they thought it presumption for any one to pretend to know it, or to expect such high attainments as I spoke of ; and they told me I was a *papist*, or I would not talk as I did. I said, I know not what you think of me ; but I think, you neither know what a *papist* or a *presbyterian* is ; for your own mouths declare, that you are no members of the *church of Scotland* ; that church disowns you ; for none are allowed members thereof, but those that are effectually called ;

called ; and they that are effectually called, do in this life partake of the *justification*, *adoption*, and *sanctification*. And the same church saith, that *justification* is an act of God's *free-grace*, wherein he pardoneth all our sins ; *adoption* is an act of God's *free grace*, by which we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of God's sons ; and that *sanctification* is the work of God's *free grace*, whereby we are renewed in the whole man, after the image of God ; and all that are so effectually called, do enjoy an assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And I pray you, what have I said more ? By your talking, you are the sons of *Rome*, and enemies to the true *Protestant religion*. Let me beg you to go home, and read the Assembly's catechism, and come and talk with me again, after you have read it." Several of them did so ; and came with tears in their eyes ; and are now witnesses, that God has power on earth to forgive sins.

I found it always in my mind, not to let any depart that came to dispute with me, till we had prayed together.

The first that was brought to experience the redeeming love of Christ, was my own brother ; and in a few days six of my neighbours.

My wife also was thoroughly convinced that she must experience the same work of grace, or perish. And during the time of her convictions, she was seized with a pleuritic fever, and her case was thought to be very dangerous : Then I besought the Lord for her with fasting and prayer. The next day she was worse ; and the distress of her soul increased the disorder of her body, so that she seemed as if she could not subsist long. That night my house was filled with people, and none of them offered to dispute with me : But I read several portions of scripture to them, some out of the Old, some out of the New Testament, and compared one with another, and prayed with them. As I was in prayer, my wife being in the parlour, but within hearing, fainted
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and was as if she had just sunk into the gulf of God's judgments: Immediately she thought she felt the Lord Jesus catch her as she was falling; and lay his hand on her side, where her disorder was and bid her be of good comfort; thy sins are forgiven. When I came to the bed-side, she was just come to herself, and said, "My dear, the Lord hath healed me both in body and soul; and I will get up and praise his holy name; and so she did; and her fever ceased from that hour; and her heart was filled with peace and love

Now God had raised up eight witnesses to himself in this place: and the enemies began to report, that I had forgiven such and such their sins. But this made many come to talk with me.

One night I went to *Adwalton*, to hear Mr. *Ingham* preach. As soon as I got into the house, he called me into the parlour, and desired the company that was with him, to go out, for he had something to say to me. When they went out, he rose up, barred the door, then he sat down by me, and asked me how my wife did? When I had told him, he said, "Do you know your own heart, think you?" I said, not rightly: But I know Jesus Christ; and he knows and hath taken possession of it; and tho' it be deceitful, yet he can subdue it to himself; and I trust he will." He said, "Have you not deceived yourself with thinking that your sins are forgiven, and that you are in a state of grace? I was three years seeking before I found him." I said, "Suppose you were, do you confine God to be three years in converting every soul, because you was so long? God is as able to convert a soul in three days now, as he was to convert *St. Paul* 1700 years ago."—I then began to tell him what I had seen at *London* under Mr. *Wesley's* preaching. He said, he pitied poor Mr. *Wesley*; for he was ignorant of his own state; and spoke as if he believed Mr. *Wesley*, to be an unconverted man; at which words my corrupt nature began to stir. But it came to my mind, the
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wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God; and I lifted up my heart to the Lord, and my mind was calm in a moment. He said, "You ought not to tell people, that they may know their sins forgiven; for the world cannot bear it: and if such a thing was preached, it would raise persecution." I said, "Let them quake that fear. By the grace of God, I love every man, but fear no man: and I will tell all I can, that there is such a prize to run for: If I hide it, mischief will come upon me. There is a famine in the land; and I see myself in the case of one of the lepers, that were at the gates of *Samaria*, who found provision in the enemy's camp: and when they had eat and drank, and loaded themselves, said, *We do not do well; for this is a day of glad tidings: Let us go, and make it known to the King's household*: When I found God's wrath removed for the sake of his dear son, and provision enough for my poor fainting soul, and for all the world, if they would come for it. I believe it is a sin, not to declare to the children of men, what God hath done for my soul, that they may seek for the same mercy." He told me, I had nothing to do with the *Old Testament*, or to make comparisons from any thing that was in it. But I said, I had as much to do with it, as with the *New Testament*. He replied, "I would not have you speak any more to the people, till you are better acquainted with your own heart." I told him, I would not in his societies, unless I was desired: But what I did in my own house, or in any other person's that requested me, he had no business with; for I said, "I do not belong to you; and though I have heard you several times, it was no benefit to me; for I had experienced more of the grace of God, before I saw your face, than ever I heard you preach of yet, or any one since I left *London*."

Soon after, he came out and began to preach; when I was greatly surprized; for what he had forbidden me to do, he did directly: He told them that night, they must know their sins forgiven in this world,

world, or go to hell, if all the devils in hell could pull them in.

I still went on at my own house, as before, every night; and in about three weeks my eight were increased to seventeen.

As I was about explaining the 7th chapter of the *Romans*, my mother fell into deep convictions, and cried, "I am a lost sinner." I went to prayers with her; and she neither eat pleasant bread, or took natural rest, till she found redemption in the blood of Christ. Then she came to me with tears of joy, and said, "Thank God on my behalf, for he hath dealt bountifully with me. When thou wast a lad, I had more trouble with thee than any other child; but God hath more than rewarded me for all my trouble, in that he hath raised thee up to shew me the way of salvation." She lived about six months after; and then died in the triumph of faith. She was the first ripe fruit, that God gave me of my labour.

Soon after, another of my brothers, my aunt, and two cousins, were converted; tho' still I did not attempt to preach, but read some part of scripture, then exhorted them to observe what they had heard; and so ended with prayer. And God wrought in a wonderful manner; for six or seven were converted in a week, for several weeks together. All this time I had no one to converse with, except such as wanted to turn me out of the narrow path; neither had I any correspondence with Mr. Wesley; but still I was as one set to labour in a field alone.

After some time, *Peter Bohler* came into *Yorkshire*, and laboured while Mr. *Ingham* went to *London*. I heard him, and he pleased me well; for at that time he spake to the purpose. When he had done I went and took him by the hand, and thanked him for his wholesome exhortation. He asked me my name? I told him: he kissed me, and said, "My brother, I am glad to see you; for I have just now been talking with some, that told me they were converted by you; and

and I like them better than any souls I have conversed with, since I came to *Yorkshire*." And he added, " I will call to see you, when I come to *Birstall*." So he did, and staid with me all night ! and he did not offer to turn me out of the way God had called me into, but encouraged me to speak on, and spare none ; for he added, " The Lord hath called you to labour in his vineyard ; and if you do not labour, he will call you to judgment for it." I told him, that Mr. *Ingham* had forbidden me : but he said, " He will be back from *London* in three weeks, when I will speak to him ; for I know, that God is with you ; and I will call on you, whenever I come thro' this town." So he did at that season ; and his conversation was, profitable to me, for he then spoke as contrary to the *Moravians*, who are in *London*, as black is to white. God blessed his word ; for many were awakened by him, at his first coming into *Yorkshire*.

When Mr. *Ingham* came back from *London*, he came to brother *Mitchell's* in our town, and sent for me. I think there were about twenty-three in the chamber with us ; and he came and kissed me, as soon as I came in, desiring me to sit down by him ; and he said, " *John*, I believe God hath called you to speak his word ; for I have spoken with several since I came back from *London*, that I believe have received grace since I went ; and I see God is working in a shorter manner, than he did with us at the beginning ; and I should be sorry to hinder any one from doing good." He said also to the brethren and sisters, " Before you all, I give *John* leave to exhort in all my societies ;" and he took me by the hand, saying, " *John*, God hath given you great honour, in that he hath made use of you, to call sinners to the blood of our Saviour ; and I desire you to exhort in all my societies, as often as you can."

I did so ; and many were struck to the heart, and were made to cry out, " Lord save or we perish !" So that nine or ten in a week, were brought to experience the dying love of Jesus ; and those that

that were of the *church of England*, to keep close to the *church and sacrament*; and the *dissenters*, to keep to their own *meetings*, and to let their light shine before those of their own community.

I found by some, that Mr. *Ingham* advised them the contrary; and several began to stay at home on the *sabbath*, and to get into the way of holding their hats on, and canting, as those I had talked with in *London*. It made me very uneasy, to see them in such a delusion.

One night I had been disputing with several of them, about their neglecting the ordinances, and their speaking against *inward holiness*, as we were going to hear *Peter Bobler* at *Charles Summerscales's*: and when he got up, he took two verses of the tenth chapter of St. *Matthew's* gospel: *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him also will I deny before my father, which is in heaven.* I thought if he had heard all that I had said, and had laboured to justify every word I had spoken, he could not have preached more to the purpose; for he said, to confess Jesus, was to live to him, and to honour him with body, soul, and substance; and to deny him, was to live to ourselves, by refusing to do what he had commanded, because it was not agreeable to nature, and did not make for our temporal interest, and he added, if any one did so much as keep the tip of his little finger, to commit sin with, it would damn both his body and soul in hell."

My adversaries now hung down their heads; and complaint was made to Mr. *Telchig*, that he preached *Wesley's* doctrine: and he was sent to *London* soon after. He came back in three weeks time; but such a change for the worse, did I never see in mortal man: for he, that professed to love me as his own soul, durst not come near the door of my house, nor converse with me at all: and his word was as chaff, in comparison to what it used to be.

Then I saw what was coming on me, and the people

people God hath given me. This made me weep in secret places, before the Lord ; and I desired to die, rather than to live, to see the children devoured by these *boars* out of the *German wood*. I saw many deluded by their soft words, and fair speeches ; and I thought I would exhort no more ; for I was begetting children ; and they slew them among the smooth stones of the brook ; and they had better never have known the way of salvation, than after knowing it, be turned thereout. But *Samuel Mitchel* urged me to speak, and not to spare. Yet I found great backwardness ; and often said, when I went out of my door, " Lord, thou knowest I had rather be hanged on that tree, than go to preach, but that I believe thou dost require it at my hand." And many a time I have said, " Except some one be converted this time, I will take it for granted, that I may leave off speaking in thy name : " but, O the condescension of the Most High ! For he so far bore with my weakness, that some were converted as sure as I asked the token. For all that, I acted the part of *Jonah*, and fled into the fields by a wood side, when a great congregation was gathered together, and begged me to preach to them. But the hand of the Lord was upon me ; and I fell flat on my face on the ground ; and I thought, that if ever a living man tasted the cup of the damned, I did : and I cried out, " Let me die, let me die ; for why should I live to see the destruction of thy people ? Or wherefore should I ever speak in thy name ; and by thy word beget children for the slaughter." I lay about an hour with my face on the grass : but O the anguish my soul was in : the sufferings of our Lord were brought to my mind, and of his apostles, and of *Jeremiah*, whose cup I had once desired at the Lord's hand. But now, when it was in a small degree put into my hand, I chose rather to die than to drink it.

I now began to be ashamed before the Lord, when I had considered how wonderfully he had dealt with me ;

me ; so that the tears began to flow, and my heart was broken within me. Then I said ; “ I am not my own, but thine ; therefore thy will be done in me, on me, and by me.” In that instant the cloud broke, and the Sun of righteousness arose on my soul ; so that I cried out, “ Lord continue with me, as thou art now, and I am ready to go to hell to preach to devils, if thou requirest it.” Then I came home, expecting the people to be gone ; but they were waiting about the door of my house. I got up and preached to them, and that night two men declared, that God for Christ’s sake had forgiven all their sins.

I thought, after I had done, if I had had 10l. I would have given it for one hour’s conversation with Mr. *John Wesley* ; but I despaired of ever having an opportunity, except I went to London on purpose ; and I said, “ I am not worthy of an upright man to converse with ; therefore I am encompassed about with briars and thorns.”

After some time, I was told, that there were twenty preachers come to the *Smith-house* ; and that four or five of them were clergymen, that had been with Mr. *Wesley* ; but they were now convinced of his errors, and were content to be poor finners ; and they hoped I should see my error in a little time, and come to the Brethren ; for all of them had been as blind, they said, as I was, and as much bigotted to Mr. *Wesley’s* notions. I told them, that what they called light, I believed to be gross darkness ; for it did not agree, with what the scriptures shewed to be the way to heaven. One of their exhorters said to me, that there were several of the *Moravian* preachers could write as good scriptures as the bible ; that the very power that the apostles had, did rest on the *Moravian* preachers. I told him, I did not believe a word of it : I believed them to be a fallen people : and I prayed God to give them repentance, and to do their first works. I said, “ I am sorry for Mr. *Ing-ham*, for he never will do half so much good as he has

has done hurt, by bringing them into this country, for they do not labour to convert sinners, but to turn faints out of the way that leads to heaven." But he said, it was I that was wrong, for they were the most experienced men in the world: and it was believed by many, that Count *Zinzendorf* was so familiar with the Lamb, that many hundreds who were now in hell, would be saved by his prayers.

A few days after, they were to have a great meeting at *Gomersal-field-house*: and one came and told me, that Mr. *Ingham* desired me to be there. And I went, but could not get into the house, where they were reading the letters, nor near the door, for the multitude, so I walked into the croft. And I believe there were two hundred people there, who had gone from the door, because they could not hear; and I preached to them in the croft, while they read the letters within. And when they had done, they sent for me into the chamber. I think there were five or six preachers, and four exhorters, and near an hundred people, who were looked upon as the chief of their societies. Then Mr. *Ingham* stood up, and said, that the country people were surpris'd to see so many of the brethren come together; they thought it prudent not to have so much preaching, till they were settled a while, for fear it should make them persecute the brethren; "And I desire that none of the young men will expound, till they are ordered by the brethren: we shall meet again this day month; and then we will let you know, what you are all to do." Then he spake to them one by one, and said, "I hope you will be obedient, and not expound any more, till you have orders." They all replied, "Yes, Sir." He then turned to me, saying, "*John*, I hope you will leave off, till you have orders from the *Church*." I said, "No, Sir; I will not leave off; I dare not; for I did not begin by the order of man, nor by my own will; therefore I shall not leave off by your order: for I tell you plainly, I should have left off without
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your bidding, but that I believed if I did, I should be damned for disobedience." He replied, " You see these young men are obedient to the elders ; and they have been blessed in their labours as well as you." I said, " I cannot tell how they have been blessed ; but I think, if God had sent them on his own errand, they would not stop at your bidding." Then one of the preachers said, " The spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets ; therefore they are right, and you are wrong ; for they are subject." I said, " You are not obedient to the prophets of God that were of old : for God saith by one of them, *I have set watchmen upon the walls of Jerusalem, that shall not cease day or night :* But you can hold your peace for a month together, at man's bidding." Then turning to Mr. Ingham, I said, " You know that many have been converted, by my exhorting lately, and a great many under convictions : what a sad thing then would it be, to leave them as they are ?" He replied, our Saviour can convert souls without your preaching." I said, " Yes, or your's either : and he can give us corn without plowing and sowing : but he doth not, neither hath he promised that he will." Then he said, be still one month : and you will know more of your own heart." I replied, " With one proviso, I will." He said, what is that ?" I answered, " If you can persuade the devil to be still for a month : But if he goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, and God hath put a sword into my hand, I am determined to attack him, wheresoever I meet him ; and wheresoever I meet sin, I meet *Satan*." Then some of them said, that their ears burned on their heads, to hear me speak to such a gentleman as Mr. Ingham. I told them, I would speak to a gentleman as I would to a beggar, in the cause of God. Mr. Ingham said, *It must needs be that offences come ; but wo to him by whom they do come.* I replied, " Sir, take care that your curse do not fall on your own head." Then he charged

charged all the people, as they loved him and the brethren, that they should not let me preach in their houses, or encourage me, by hearing me elsewhere. Then I said, "I hope you will not hinder those, who were converted under my word, from hearing me; for they are my own children." He said they would hinder them; for they were none of mine, but our Saviour's children. I answered, "I have as much right to call them my children, as St. Paul had to call the *Galatians* his; and if they perish, by being turned out of the way thro' you, I will require their blood at your hand." Then Mr. Clapham said, "May not I have some private conversation with John?" Mr. Ingham said, "Yes." And Mr. Clapham said, "He shall be my teacher while I live;" So it was; for he died in the faith within a fortnight.

When I got home, there were several people at my house, waiting to be instructed in the way to the kingdom. One of them said, "What is the matter? Are you not well? you look so pale!" I said, "I have neither pain nor sickness of body; but my soul is disordered within me, for they have bereaved me of my children, and commanded them not to hear me before my face. O! these treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously! I am sorry Mr. Ingham should be a tool in their hands, to turn the simple out of the way; but I hope he does it in ignorance; if he knows what he is doing, he will be a miserable man: for it is a less crime to take a child of God, and cut his throat, and thereby send him to heaven at once, than to turn him out of the way, and to destroy both body and soul; nevertheless, let us pray for him and them." So we went to prayer; and when we arose from our knees, I took the bible, requesting God to speak to me by his word; I opened on the 49th chapter of *Isaiah*, and the 19th verse, *For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow, by reason of the inhabitants: and they that swallowed thee up, shall be far away: the children, which thou shalt have after thou*
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hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, *The place is too streight for me; give place to me, that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, removing to and fro; and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?* At the reading of which words, I and all that were in the house were so affected, that we burst out into weeping: and God gave me one child, in answer to my prayer that night.

It was soon spread abroad, that Mr. *Ingham* and *Nelson* had differed; and many said, "We shall now see an end of this new religion!" Several of them, who *once* professed to love me as their own lives, *now* became my open enemies, and laboured to draw all from me they could. They said I made my bible my God, and would take it up in a scornful manner, saying. "This is *John Nelson's* God! poor man, he hurts himself much by reading in it; it would be better for him, if he would let it alone, and abide by his heart."

Then I said, "Wo is me that ever my mother bare me, to be a man of strife to all that are about me: but, Lord, I commit my cause to thee!"

So I went on preaching repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; insisting on those that believed, to be careful to maintain good works. But many, that once said they might bless God they ever heard me, now called me *legal*; and told me to my face, that I never knew the *gospel liberty*, nor what it was to enjoy the *poor sinner's* ship. I replied, "I do not desire to know it; I only want to know the perfect and acceptable will of God, and power to do the same." They said, they had *nothing* to do, for the *Lamb* had done *all* for them.

After their next monthly meeting, one that had exhorted, came and called me out of my house, saying, he wanted to speak with me. I went out; when he told me the *brethren* had sent him; and they had the same power as the *apostles* had; all that withstood

withstood them were soon miserable. I said, "What do you hobble at in your speech? If you came to tell me that they have given me up into the hands of the devil, speak out, *Michael!*" He said they had. I replied, "I hope I shall pray for them as long as I live: but go you back, and tell them, I have the devil under my heel; and he can never hurt me, so long as I have the grace of God."

Soon after I went with another, that had got into the *poor sinner's ship*, who held his neck on one side, and talked as if he had been bred upon the borders of *Bobemia*; and he said, the *brethren* were sorry for me: nay he heard some of them say, that they would take care of my wife and children; I told them I would see my wife and children die on a dung-hill, before I would sell my soul, and the souls of my country people.

I still kept close to God by prayer and fasting; and was daily refreshed with a sense of his love; and he opened my mouth more and more, to speak his word; and sinners were converted.

Samuel Mitchell encouraged me much; and went with me, almost every night that I went out of town, often four or five miles, after we had done our work, and we used to come back together the same night, in all sorts of weather.

One night, after a day of fasting, I dreamt, that Mr. *John* and Mr. *Charles Wesley* were both sitting by my fire-side; and Mr. *John* said, "I will but stay a few days now, for I will go into the North, and return at such a time, and then stay with you a week." The next day when I told it, one said, "If thou hast dreamed so, they will certainly come." I replied, I can no more expect them, than I expect the king to come." But a few months after they did, and sat in the very posture I dreamed, and Mr. *John* spoke the very words.

I was desired once more, to go to *Gombersal-field head*, to speak with Mr. *Ingham*; and when I got there, *David Taylor* was with him in the parlour, and

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spoke

spoke kindly to me ; but when Mr. *Taylor* was gone, he began to talk to me, about making division among the *Brethren*. I told him, I did not want to make division ; I wanted the people to be saved. But he said, " We cannot receive you or Mr. *Wesley* into our community, till he publicly declare he has printed false doctrine, and you declare you have preached false." I said, " Wherein ?" He then burst out into laughter and said, " In telling the people, that they may live without committing sin." I replied, " Do you call that false doctrine ?" He said, " I do ; and Mr. *Wesley* has written false doctrine, teaching the same errors." He quoted some words ; then I said, " They are not Mr. *Wesley's*, but St. *John's* words : It is St. *John* says, *Let no man deceive you : He that doth righteousness, is righteous : and he that committeth sin, is of the devil.* So if St. *John* be right, every one that preacheth contrary to what Mr. *Wesley* has written here, and what I have preached, he is a deceiver and a betrayer of souls." He said, " If that be your opinion, we cannot receive you into our church." I replied, " I don't want to be one of you ; for I am a member of the church of *England*." He said, " The church of *England* is no church ; we are the church." " I said, " We ! who do you mean ?" He replied, " I and the *Moravian brethren*." I said, " I have no desire to have any fellowship with you or them ; it is better for my own soul, since I have been wholly separated from you, and God hath blest my labour more, since I was told they had delivered me up to *Satan*, than ever before : therefore I think it is better to have their curse, than to have communion with them." He replied, if you think so, I have no more to say to you." And then turned his back on me.

When I went home, I met with one that had got into the *liberty* ; and he told me that the devil had sent me into *Yorkshire*, to hinder the *brethren* from having the country to themselves. I answered, " If *Satan* sent me, he is divided against himself, for you know,

know, by my preaching many are turned, that were grossly wicked, to live a righteous life." He said no men should be damned, but for their own righteousness : and when I mentioned any scripture, he laughed me to scorn, saying, " You will never be happy till you leave off those scripture notions, and come to your own heart, and be a *poor sinner*."

Now a trial came upon me, from another quarter : some of them came to my house, when I was from home, and talked with my wife, stirring her up against me, so that she was tempted to go to them, and leave me ; and the temptation was so strong, that she got out of bed three times, to go to them ; nay, the more I reasoned with her from scripture, in ever so loving a manner, the more she was set against me : then I had none but my old refuge, to get to God by prayer, and fasting ; and the Lord took the matter into his own hand, and shewed her, wherein she had been deceived, and made her a staff in my hand, and a support to my soul again.

About this time, one of my neighbours, that used to hear me preach, was going to *London*, and said, " I should be glad to see Mr. *John Wesley*, whom you call your father in the gospel." I replied, " If you will carry a few lines for me to him, you may see and hear him too." So he did ; wherein I desired Mr. *Wesley* to write to me ; and as he was my father in the gospel, to give me some instructions how to proceed, in the work that God had begun to do by such an unpolished tool as me. When he got to *London*, he wrote to me, that he had seen Mr. *Wesley* and given him the letter ; who read it, and asked him some questions about me, and said, " Do you write by this night's post, and tell him I shall be at his house on Tuesday next (if God permit.)" I got the letter on Sunday, and was melted into tears before the Lord.

That day the Lord blessed our souls much, while we were praying that he would conduct his servant

in safety to us, and bless his coming amongst us ; but he was detained on the road, so that it was Wednesday at nine o' clock in the forenoon when he arrived at *Birfal*. He sent for me to the inn, from whence I conducted him to my house, and he sat down by my fire side, in the very posture I had dreamed about four months before ; and spoke the same words I dreamed he spoke.

Before he went to *Newcastle*, large companies of those that had left me, came to hear him ; several of whom said, they never heard such a sermon in their lives, nor ever felt so much of the power of God, under any man's preaching.

Some said, when *Mr. Ingham* came first, he was often telling of this *Mr. Wesley*, saying, he believed he never talked with him but it was a blessing to his soul, and extolled him above any man that ever they heard him talk of ; and now they thought he exceeded all that *Mr. Ingham* had said about him ; but they were greatly surprized, that *Mr. Ingham* should go through *Birfal*, and not call to see *Mr. Wesley*.

When *Mr. Wesley* came from *Newcastle*, their minds were changed ; for they did not come to hear him. I asked several of them the reason ; and they told me, *Mr. Ingham* said he preached false doctrine, and it was not safe to hear him.

However he did not preach in vain ; for God blessed his word, and his coming was a great blessing to my soul. I said to him, " Sir, you may make use of *Jacob's* words, *The children thou begat in Egypt before are mine* ; for I freely deliver them to your care."

After he had spent about a week, he left me : But now they that staid with me were confirmed in the truth they had received ; and many were convinced of the necessity of being born again, so that greater multitudes than ever came to hear, and several were converted.

One Saturday night, there came a number of people

people that were halting between the *Germans* and me; and as I preached to them, my mouth was almost stopped, and all the time it appeared to me as if I was plowing upon a rock; nevertheless, when I had done, and was got to the fire-side, the people did not offer to go away, but stood as beggars that wanted a morsel of bread. I then took up the bible, and opened on the prophecy of *Isaiab*, where it saith, *I have blotted out thy transgression as a cloud, and thy sins as a thick cloud; Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.* And I said, "Hear ye the word of the Lord!" So I read those words to them as I stood, and began to explain them, when the power of God came as a mighty wind, and many cried out, "Lord, save, or we perish!" I fell upon my knees, and called upon God to heal the bones that were broken, and to shew mercy to the poor and needy; and he heard our cry, so that seven testified that God for Christ's sake, had blotted out all their sins that night; and most of them told me, they purposed only to hear me that time, and to have gone to the *Germans* the next day.

Now the people from every quarter flocked to *Birfal* on the sabbath, but as yet there came only three from *Leeds*, *Mary Shent*, and two other women.

It was about *May* when Mr. *John Wesley* came to *Larkshire*, and towards *Michaelmas* that Mr. *Charles Wesley* and Mr. *Charles Graves* came. They staid a few days, then went on to *Newcastle*, with an intent to return in a fortnight; but the Lord opened such a door in that place, that Mr. *Wesley* staid some time longer. Mr. *Graves* came at the time appointed, and the Lord blessed his coming to several souls. I remember, one night at *Armley* he preached, and when he had done I gave an exhortation, and the Lord applied the virtue of his precious blood to nine souls that night; two the next morning, and for a whole week together there were some that felt the atoning blood of *JESUS CHRIST*.

When Mr. *Charles Wesley* came back from *New-*

the Lord was with him in such a manner, that the pillars of hell seemed to tremble; many that were famous for supporting the devil's kingdom fell to the ground, while he was preaching, as if they had been thunder-struck. One day he had preached four times, and one that had been amongst the people all the day, said at night, twenty-two had received forgiveness of their sins that day.

I think, from the time of Mr. *Charles Wesley* and Mr. *Grave's* first coming, and their leaving *Yorksire*, after their return from *Newcastle*, which was about a month, there were added to the true believers near fourscore. Then they began to cry out, "The place is too streight for us; we should have a greater house!" So that the words of *Isaiab* that I opened on, when the *Germans* bereaved me of my former children, were fulfilled.

About this time *William Shent* was converted; and there began to be an uproar in *Leeds*, about his saying he knew his sins forgiven. Some, however, believed his report, and had a desire to hear for themselves; neither could he be content to eat his morsel alone, for his heart panted for the salvation of all his neighbours.

The *Christmas* following he desired me to go and preach at *Leeds*; but when I gave notice of it to the Society, they advised me not to go till we had kept a day of fasting and prayer. So we humbled ourselves before the Lord on the Friday and on Sunday night I went to *Leeds*, several of the brethren accompanying me. As we were going over the bridge, we met two men who said to me, "If you attempt to preach in *Leeds*, you must not expect to come out again alive; for there is a company of men that swear they will kill you." I said, "They must ask my master's leave; for if he has any more work for me to do, all the men in the town cannot kill me, till I have done it."

When we got to Brother *Shent's*, he had provided a large empty house to preach in, and it was well filled

filled with people. As soon as I got upon the stairs, I felt an awful sense of God rest upon me, and the people behaved as people that feared God, and received the word with meekness.

Now *Armley* society became as a nursing mother to the new-born souls of *Leeds*; for there were several steady souls at *Armley*, who had stood from the beginning without wavering, and I trust we shall meet together in heaven.

Sometime after we had begun at *Leeds*, Mr. *John Bennet*, from *Chinley* in *Derbyshire*, came to our town, and sent for me to the inn: I did not know him, but by his dress I took him to be a Preacher. I said, "I do not know you: pray what is your name?" He told me. I asked him if he came from Mr. *Wesley*? He said, no: he was not in connexion with him; he was in fellowship with the *Moravian brethren*: but he had had a great opinion of Mr. *Wesley* for some time, till he saw a little pamphlet which Mr. *Wesley* had lately published, which he styles *The Character of a Methodist*, and it had turned his mind. I said, "Sir, what do you find wrong there?" He replied, "There is too much perfection in it for me." I said, "Then you think a less degree of holiness will fit you for heaven, than what is mentioned there; pray, what are the words you stumble at?" I said, "They are the words of St. *John*, without any addition." But he said, "We know by experience, that there is no such thing to be attained in this life." I said, "If your experience does not answer to what St. *Paul* and *John* speak, I shall not regard it;" and when I mentioned some passages of scripture, he said, he did not believe that what I said was scripture. I pulled out my bible, and shewed him the words; and when he had read them, his countenance changed, and he cavilled no more.

When we met again, we seemed to be of one heart and judgment; for God revealed his will to him soon after he had parted with me, and made him

him an instrument to turn many to righteousness, and to bring me and my brethren to preach in *Lancashire*, *Cheshire*, and *Derbyshire*.

The first time I went, he met me at *Marsden*, to conduct me into *Cheshire*; but as I went over a great common, a little behind *Huddersfield*, a dog leaped out of the heath and came and smelled at my leg, and walked by my side for near a mile; he then went to the houses that were a little out of the way, and bit several dogs, and came running after me again, so walked by my side till he saw another house, where he fought with a dog, then followed me again; thus he went on for about five miles, and went with me into the inn at *Marsden*, when he sat down by my side. There were several men in the house, whom I asked, if any of them knew whose dog he was, but none of them could tell. I said, "I think he is mad;" but they laughed me to scorn. Soon after another dog came in, and he went and bit him directly, and ran out and bit four more, when the men pursued and killed him. When I saw, that God had kept me in such immediate danger, I was greatly humbled before him.

As Mr. *Bennet* and I went over *Stanedge*, we met *David Taylor*, who had got so much into the *poor sinner's* ship, that he would scarce speak to me: he called Mr. *Bennet* to a distance, and said he was sorry that he was going to take me into *Derbyshire*: for I was so full of the law and reason, that I should do a great deal of hurt wherever I preached.

I preached twice that afternoon, once at *Hopkin-pit*, in *Lancashire*, and the other time at *Woodley*, in *Cheshire*. It was given out, unknown to me, for me to preach at *Manchester-cross* on the Sunday in the afternoon. About ten people went with me from Mr. *Lockwood's* to *Manchester*: When we arrived there, I do not know but there might be two thousand people gathered together at the cross; and most of them behaved well; but when I was in the middle

middle of my discourse, one at the outside of the congregation threw a stone which cut me on the head: however, that made the people give greater attention, especially when they saw the blood run down my face; so that all was quiet till I had done, and was singing a hymn: then the constable and his deputy came and seized me and Mr. Bennet, and said we must go before the justice. I replied, "By what order." He held up his staff, saying, that was his warrant, and he would make me go. I answered, I will not resist; for if I have done any thing contrary to the law, I ought to suffer by the law." He said, I should suffer for what I had done; then he began to strike the people, that crowded about us. As soon as he and his deputy could get through the multitude, they out-ran us; when I called and said, "Stay, Gentlemen, for we cannot get through the people as fast as you." But the people crowded about us in such a manner, that we saw the constable no more. Afterwards we rode to *Jonathan Holme's*. That night we had a blessed meeting; and the Lord was much with us, all the time I stayed in those parts.

Soon after Mr. *John Wesley* came into *Yorkshire* again; and the Lord blessed his coming to many souls. When he set out for *Newcastle*, he desired me to go to *Grimby* in *Lincolnshire*, and to spend a few days there, among some people that had once run well, but were turned out of the way, by one that had come down from *London*, who had got into the poor *sinner's* ship, and was made free from the righteous law of God, and from all ordinances and good works. He brought many of them into his own liberty, so that they sold their prayer-books, left off reading and praying, and followed the motions of their own minds, which they called *the lamb in their hearts*: but one or two remained under the law as they call it, that is, they still continued to read the bible, and durst not leave off prayer, nor any other ordinance that Christ had appointed. These came to *Epworth* to seek the pure gospel; and when they heard

heard Mr. *Wesley*, they said his word was as sweet wine to a thirsty soul.

I set out with a great sense of my own weakness, and was ready to turn back: then I opened my bible, where these words were written, *I was afraid, and went and hid my talent in the ground.* I cried out, "Lord, give me strength and understanding for the work, if thou hast called me to it." I opened my book again, on the 14th chapter of *Isaiah*, and the 1st verse, *For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land, and the strangers shall be joined with them.* That night I got to *Epworth*, and preached to a large congregation.

The next morning, I and a man that belonged to *Grimby*, and a boy about twelve years of age, set out on foot for *Grimby*, but night came upon us when we were five miles short of it, and there being no public-house near there, we went to several farm-houses to ask for lodging, but could get none. Then we went to a poor house, where I prevailed with the people to let the boy lie with two of their own boys; and I said to the man, "Let us go and seek a bed somewhere else, or a stable to lie in." As we went on in the dark, we saw a light at a small distance, and we went over a field to it. I knocked at the door, and they bid us come in: there were four men, three women, and two boys, sitting by the fire. As soon as I entered, I said, "Peace be to this house," at which words the people started up as if I had thrown fire at them; I said, "We are two wayfaring men, and if you will entertain us for a night, we will satisfy you. They got us a good supper, and made up a good bed. I talked to them about the way of salvation, and went to prayer with them, and they were so taken, that the master and the mistress talked to me two hours after we were in bed. The next morning after breakfast, I went to pay the woman; but she said her husband charged her to take nothing, but on the contrary,

contrary, to give us some money to support us on the road; but I said, "Not one farthing will we have, and if you will not take our money, I pray God reward you with everlasting consolation."

We then went where we had left the boy, and paid the people for him, and set out for *Grimshy*, which we reached by ten o'clock. The people soon heard that I was come, and flocked to me directly, when I prayed with them, and began to exhort, but many of them despised my words, saying, I was too legal for them. I then took up my bible and said, "Hear ye the word of the Lord!" So I read two or three verses, and bid them try themselves by that standard; then I read in another place, and said, "If you will compare your consciences with these scriptures, you may see what state your souls are in." One woman turned pale and began to tremble, saying "I clearly see we are deluded, and that what we called the *lamb in our hearts* is nothing but the devil." Then she cried out, "Alas! alas! what must we do?" We went to prayer again, and God made the kingdom of *Satan* to shake once more in that place.

The second night, a schoolmaster sent me word, that he would give me leave to preach in his school, which would hold several hundreds of people: but those that had fallen into the *poor sinnership* told me, if I did they durst not go to hear me, for they should be mobbed, and I should be killed. I said, "As the gentleman has made me the offer, I will accept it, and by the grace of God will preach, if there were as many devils in it, as there are tiles on it." Accordingly I went, and it was well filled from side to side, and the people behaved well; I found great liberty in speaking, and when I had done, several cried out, "This is the way of salvation."

When I came back to brother *Blow's*, in peace, those that had been shorn of their strength, confessed their fearfulness, and said, "While we continued in the spirit in which we were converted, we were as bold as lions; oh, what shall we do to recover our strength?"

strength?" I told them to humble themselves before the Lord with prayer and fasting, and he would snatch them out of the snare of the devil, and give them back their first love.

I preached again the next morning, and set out for *Epworth*; in my way I stopt at *Ferry*, where I preached at four in the afternoon, and got into *Epworth* by seven that evening.

When I came there, such a large company was gathered together, that I could not get into the house, nor yet one third of the people, tho' it was dark and snowed: however, I desired them to hand me out a chair; so I stood up in the snow, and preached, and they behaved as well as ever I knew a congregation in my life; and it appeared that God blessed his word to many souls that night.

When I went home, I found God had opened the mouth of *Jonathan Reeves*, and blessed his word to numbers about *Birslal*; and we laboured together for some time, till I returned again into Mr. *Bennet's* round.

I went into the *Peak* to preach at *Mony-ash*, when a clergyman, with a great company of men that worked in the lead-groves, all being in liquor came in just as I began to give out the hymn: as soon as we began to sing, he began to halloo and shout, as if he was hunting with a pack of hounds, and so continued all the time we sang. When I began to pray, he attempted to overturn the chair that I stood on, but he could not, although he struck so violently with his foot, that he broke one of the arms of the chair quite off. When I began to preach, he called on his companions to pull me down; but they replied, "No, Sir, the man says nothing but the truth; pray Sir hold your peace and let us hear what he has to say?" He then came himself, took me by the collar of my shirt, and pulled me down; then he tore down my coat cuffs, and attempted to tear it down the back, then took me by the collar and shook me. I said, "Sir, you and I must shortly appear

appear at the bar of God to give an account of this night's work." He replied, "What! must you and I appear before God's bar together." I said, "As sure as we look one another in the face now." He let go my throat, took my bible out of my hand, and turning it over and over, said, "It is a right bible; and if you preach by the spirit of God, let me hear you preach from this text;" which was, *Wisdom strengtheneth the wise, more than ten mighty men in the city*: Then I got up and began to speak from his text, and if any offered to make a noise, the grovers said, "Hold your peace, or we will make you, and let us hear what he will make of the parson's text." As I went on, the parson said, "That is right, that is true;" after a while he looked round and saw many in tears; then he looked at me, and went away, leaving me to finish my discourse in peace. All the rest of the round I had peaceable meetings; and the Lord kept still adding to the number of his children.

At my return, I began to preach in the open street, at brother *Shent's* door, in *Leeds*, and great companies flocked to hear me. The first time I stood up in the street, I was struck on the head with an egg and two potatoes, but that neither hindered me from speaking, nor them from hearing. I heard that several serious people, as soon as I had done, went to an old clergyman to ask his advice about the doctrine I had preached, and told him as much of the sermon as they could: he said, he hoped no one had disturbed me for preaching that doctrine; they told him some had thrown potatoes at me, and spoiled my wig and coat with a rotten egg: he said, he would rather lose his arm than throw at any man for preaching such doctrine: for that was the marrow of the gospel. Many lost their prejudice by his word, and embraced the truth with joy; so that I preached in the streets in *Leeds*, every other Sunday morning, with very little disturbance.

After some time I went into *Lincolnshire* again;
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and the congregation was so large at *Grimshy*, that I was obliged to stand upon a table at brother *Blow's* back door for several days together. As I was preaching, the minister and three men came to play at quoits, as near the people as they could get ; but with all their playing and shouting, they could not draw any one from hearing.

Some friends from *Tetney* and *Cleathorps* got me to go to a shepherd's house near the sea-coast. There was a large company gathered together in that desert, and I opened my book on the 1st of *Galatians* and 3d verse, *Grace be unto you, and peace from GOD the Father, and from our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of GOD and our Father.* I felt much of the Lord's presence, and the power of God was so great among us, that the people fell flat on their faces, or kneeled down on their knees, so that there was not one left standing, and their cry was so great, that my voice could not be heard then I fell on my knees and called upon the Lord to heal the bones that were broken, and I believe many will praise God for that meeting to all eternity.

In my return to *Epworth*, I was desired to go by *Haintan*, and several from *Grimshy* went with me. When we got there *William Fennick* told me, there were a company of men at the bowling-green, who had made themselves almost drunk on purpose to kill me : I told him, that God was my defence, and I believed he would deliver me from them all. As soon as they heard I was come, they all left the bowls, and came to *William Fennick's*, many of them with sticks about two feet long and as thick as a man's wrist : some of them began to sing a psalm, and others to curse and swear ; but I reproved them, and they had no power to meddle with me. At the appointed hour I went into the street, and spoke to them in the name of the Lord ; and God put a bridle in the jaws of the wicked, so that they stood patiently

patiently to hear, while I was reasoning with them about the necessity of being made holy here, that we may not be damned eternally. A lusty, red-faced gentlewoman exclaimed aloud, "I am a papist, and believe I shall be cleansed in purgatory. When I had done, I said, "I appeal to all your consciences, that I have not spoken my own words, but the words of the Lord. A gentleman answered, we allow all you say is true; yet you deserve to be set in the stocks for delivering it in the street.

As I went into the house, one hit me with an egg on my head, and the people crouded so fast into the house that I could scarce turn me; at last I got to sit upon a dresser, and spoke to them for an hour, and God began to work on several of them; but as soon as they began to tremble and cry out, "Lord save or we perish," others made all the haste they could to get out of the house.

When I got to *Epworth*, I found the people much in earnest at that time, and my own soul greatly blessed in speaking to them.

After I had laboured in *Yorkshire* a while longer, Mr. *John Wesley* sent for me to *London*: But by this time I had almost worn out my cloaths, and did not know where the next should come from: My wife said I was not fit to go any where as I was; and I said, "I have worn them out in the Lord's work, and he will not let me want long. Two days after, a tradesman in our parish, that did not belong to our society came to my house, and brought me a piece of blue cloth for a coat, and a piece of black cloth for a waistcoat and breeches; so I see the Lord is mindful of them that trust in him.

As soon as I well could, I set out for *London* on foot, but one of my neighbours was going, and he took my pace, and let me ride sometimes. I preached at *Nottingham Cross* as I went.

I staid a few days at *London*, then Mr. *Richards* and I set out for *Oxford*. We both preached at *High-Wycombe* as we went.

When we came to *Oxford*, we met three young gentlemen in their gowns in the street, but I think I never heard a soldier or a sailor swear worse than they did. Mr. *Richards* being first and a Collegian himself said, "Gentlemen, I am ashamed to hear you: It is a sad thing, that you should come here to learn to be guides to others in the way to heaven, and continue to go in the way to destruction yourselves!" One of them said with a curse, "What are you a *presbyterian*? When I spoke, another of them said, "These chaps belong to poor *Wesley*; so they went away.

We spent a sabbath at *Oxford*; and some of the Collegians behaved very rudely as I was preaching in the evening; but the Lord put his hook in their jaws, and kept them from doing any harm to the people, or hindering me in my discourse.

The next day we got to *Cirencester*, and staid two nights there; and one of the brethren went with us to *Bristol*.

All this journey, we had but one horse between Mr. *Richards* and me.

After I had staid a few days at *Bristol*, and had once preached at *Bath*, Mr. *Wesley*, Mr. *Downs* and I set out for *Cornwall*. Mr. *Downs* and I had but one horse, so we rode by turns. Mr. *Wesley* preached at *Taunton-Cross* and *Exeter castle* as we went. We generally set out before Mr. *Wesley* and Mr. *Shepherd*.

One day we had travelled near twenty miles and had not baited; when we came to a village and enquired for an inn; but the people told us there was none in the town, nor any on our road within twelve *Cornish* miles: Then I said, "Come, brother *Downs*, we must live by faith." When we had stood awhile, I said, "Let us go to yonder house, where the stone porch is, and ask for something; so we did, and the woman said, "we have bread, butter, and milk, and good hay for your horse." When we had refreshed ourselves, I gave the woman a shilling; but

but she said, she did not desire any thing; I said, "I insist upon it."

We got to *Bodmin* that night; but it was late before Mr. *Wesley* and Mr. *Shepherd* arrived, having lost the path in the twelve-mile common, and found the way again by the sound of the bells. The next day we got to *Gwenap*, and the day after to *St. Ives*. The following day, I worked at my own business, and continued to work for several days.

When I had done my job of work, I went to *St. Just*, and preached at the cross to a large company of well-behaved people. Then I went to the land's end, and preached the same evening. The next morning, which was Sunday, I came to *Morva* church: after service I preached there, and in the evening at *Zunmor*.

When I had been out a week, I returned to *St. Ives*, and found brother *Downs* in a fever, so that he was not able to preach at all. All that time Mr. *Wesley* and I lay on the floor: he had my great coat for his pillow, and I had *Burkit's* notes on the New Testament for my bolster.

After being here near three weeks, one morning about three o'clock, Mr. *Wesley* turned over, and finding me awake, clapped me on the side, saying, "Brother *Nelson*, let us be of good cheer; I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but one side."

We usually preached on the commons, going from one common to another, and it was but seldom any one asked us to eat or drink.

One day we had been at *St. Hillary-downs*, and Mr. *Wesley* had preached from *Ezekiel's* vision of dry bones, and there was a shaking among the people, as he preached. And as we returned, Mr. *Wesley* stopped his horse to pick the blackberries, saying, "Brother *Nelson*, we ought to be thankful that there is plenty of blackberries; for this is the best country I ever saw for getting a stomach, but the worst that ever I saw for getting food; do the people think, we can live by preaching?" I said, "I

know not what they may think; but one asked me to eat something, as I came from St. *Just*, when I eat heartily of barley bread and honey." He said, "You was well off; I had a thought of begging a crust of bread of the woman, where I met the people at *Morva*, but forgot it till I had got some distance from the house."

One Sunday, having been at the *Land's-end* in the morning, and at *Morva* at noon, I came to *Zunmor* to preach at night, and got there before the afternoon service began. In the sermon the minister said, "Here is a people, that hold that damnable *popish* doctrine of *justification by faith*; therefore I beg you not to hear them." After the service was over, I went about two hundred yards from the church, and got upon a rock of stone, where I began to sing an hymn, and I believe the whole congregation came to hear me. According to the light I had, I shewed what was the faith of the *gospel*, and what the faith of the *church of Rome*.

I stayed a fortnight after Mr. *Wesley* was gone, and I found my soul much blessed among the people.

When Mr. *Wesley* arrived at *Bristol*, he wrote to me a letter, wherein he desired me to call at three different places to preach, in my way to *Bristol*.

When I left Capt. *Hitchens's*, I was benighted on the twelve-mile common, and was wet to the skin; but by the providence of God I came to the house, where I had called in going down. I knocked at the door, and the woman knew my voice, and said, "The Lord blefs you, come in." As soon as I went into the house, they pulled off my wet cloaths, and put me on dry ones, and got me something warm for supper: they took my wet cloaths out of my bags, which they rinsed, dried, and ironed. We sang an hymn, went to prayer, and I gave them an exhortation that night. The next morning, the man rose up, and alarmed that and another village, so that by seven o'clock I had about three hundred to preach to, who all seemed to receive the word with

with joy. I heard, soon afterwards, that the man and his wife, who received us, had received the Lord that sent us.

The next night I came to *Sticklepath*, and preached to a large congregation in a field. As I was speaking, a woman, who had been brought up a *Quaker*, began to tremble, and in a little time sunk down upon the grass, and laid till I had done. Then they brought her to Mrs. *Bidgood's*, where I was; and I prayed with her. Although most of the company were *Quakers*, yet they desired me to sing, and read several of our hymns.

The next morning, before I began to preach, the woman that fell down, with two more, came into the room where I was, and she said, "I had no rest in the night, the anguish of my soul was so great, and I desire thee to pray with me." We went to prayer, and when we rose up, she said, "O praise the Lord, for to-day is the day of *Pentecost* with me."

After I had done preaching, an exciseman, who came from *Crockern-wells*, told me, that it was given out for me to preach there at ten o'clock that forenoon, and he was to conduct me. So we set out directly, and I preached in an orchard. Among the rest of the people, was a clergyman and his wife. All behaved well.

Almost as soon as I alighted at the *Oxford-inn*, in *Exeter*, a man came to conduct me to the place, where I was to preach. There was a clergyman in the next room, who soon came into the room where I was, and asked me how the two Mr. *Wesleys* did, and insisted upon my supping with him. I told him, I must go to preach first. He said he would go with me; and so he did. As I was preaching, the clerk of a parish fell down, and after him another man and woman: they did not cry out, but lay groaning for mercy. After I had done, and the greater part of the people gone, I went to prayer with them that were in distress.

As we went back to the inn, the clergyman said, "I dare not pray as you did to-night; you prayed
that

that God would give you some fruit in that place, as he had done in others: I have been a preacher for many years, and I cannot say that I have had any fruit, that any one has been converted by my preaching in all my life." I replied, "If you be not converted yourself, and have not a greater commission than man can give you, you may preach all your days, and never convert one soul."

When we were at supper, he asked me how Mr. Wesley went on: and when he heard how he lived, and how he was treated by wicked men, he said, "If that be the way to heaven, I think I shall never get there; my flesh is not brass, nor my bones iron." I replied, "You do not know what you can bear, till you come to be tried." He said, "Well, I believe Mr. W—— is the greatest man in the kingdom, but I think he uses too much austerity." We talked, till eleven o'clock, then parted in love. I saw him no more, but have heard since, that he receives Mr. Wesley to preach in his church, and that God hath made him an instrument of converting sinners.

I preached the next morning, and then set out for *Axminster*, where I preached in the open street, at three in the afternoon, to a well-behaved people, though it was the second day of their fair.

The next day, I went to *Thorngrave* near *Middlesey*. That night God blessed his word to several, as appeared afterwards. One gentlewoman was convinced that night, who four years after sent my wife four guineas, which came in good time; for she had borrowed four guineas of a neighbour to buy a cow, and the time for payment was come, and she had not money to pay.

When I got to *Bristol*, I found my soul much blessed among the people, and in those ten days there were several, that found the Lord.

In my return home, I preached at *Stroud*, and several other places, in my way to *Wadnabury*, whither I came not long after the people had been mobbed in such a cruel manner. I preached in an

open yard to very large congregations of people, several times; some of the mobbers came to hear me, but all behaved well: so he, who stops the raging of the sea, can stay the madness of the people.

After spending a few days there, I set out for *Nottingham*, and stayed there two days. I preached at the *Malt Cross* on the sabbath, to a large congregation, in great peace; but the Monday being a rejoicing day, they had bon-fires in the market-place, and some came with squibs to disturb me as I was preaching. One of them threw a squib on fire close to my heels, but a woman kicked it away; the man caught it up again to throw at me, but it burst in his hand, and he went away shaking his head. Another came on the low side of the cross, with a design to throw one in my face; but as he aimed it at mine, the wind blew it back, and it went off in his own. The third came on the wind side of me, with an intent to throw one in my face; but I did not turn my face that way as soon as he expected, so that it burst in his own hand. As soon as I had done, a serjeant of the army came to me with tears in his eyes, and said, "In the presence of God and all this people, I beg your pardon; for I came on purpose to mob you, but when I could get no one to assist me, I stood to hear you, and am convinced of the deplorable state my soul is in, and I believe you are a servant of the living God." He then kissed me, and went away weeping.

When I got home, I found my wife much better, tho' never likely to recover her former strength; owing to the persecution she met with at *Wakefield*, when Mr. *Larwood* was mobbed there. After they had abused him, she with some more women set out for *Birstal*, and a mob followed them into the fields: when they overtook them, she turned about and spake to them, upon which all the men returned without touching them; but the women followed them till they came to a gate, where they stopt them; they damned her, saying, "You are *Nelson's* wife,
and

and here you shall die." They saw she was big with child, yet beat her on the body so cruelly, that they killed the child in her womb, and she went home and miscarried directly; this treatment she has reason to remember to her live's end; but God more than made it up to her, by filling her heart with peace and love.

There had been some disturbance at *Leeds*, and I was the first that stood up after, at brother *Sbeni's* door. A number of men had protested to pull down the first man that attempted to preach there; but if the fear of God could not restrain them, the fear of the magistrates did, so that they did not meddle with me; only some boys threw about a peck of turnips at me, but not one of them hit me. That was a blessed morning to many souls: two that had been enemies, were struck to the ground, and cried out for the disquietude of their souls. I preached often afterwards with little disturbance, and believers were multiplied in *Leeds*.

After I had staid a few months in *Yorkshire*. I went a third time into *Lincolnshire*. As I went thro' *Eppworth*, we had peaceable and blessed meetings; but when I came to *Grimby*, the minister got a man to beat the town drum thro' the town, and went before the drum, and gathered all the rabble he could, giving them liquor to go with him, to fight for the church. When they came to Br. *Blow's* door, they set up three huzzas, and the parson cried out, "Pull down the house, pull down the house!" but no one offer'd to touch the house till I had done preaching: Then they broke the windows, till they had not left one whole square about the house; and as the people went out, they abused them, till some of the mobbers began to fight their fellows for abusing the women, so that most of the people got away while they were fighting one with another. Not long after, the minister gathered them together again, and gave them more drink; then they came and broke the stanchions

of

of the windows, pulled up the paving in the streets, which they threw in at the windows, and broke the household goods in pieces, the parson crying out, " If they will not turn out the villain, that we may put him in the black-ditch, pull down the house."

While they were drumming, cursing and swearing, fighting and breaking the goods, one of the neighbours, that was not a hearer, went to an alderman, and said, " Some order must be taken with these men, for if they be suffered to go on as they do, they will ruin *William Blow*, and I fear they will kill somebody." But the good alderman said he would do nothing but lend them his mash-rub to pump the preacher in. Then the mob fell out again one with another, and dispersed, when they had laboured from seven till almost twelve at night. The parson said to the drummer, " I will reward you for your pains, but be sure to come at five in the morning, for the villain will be preaching again then." So the drummer did, and began to beat, just as I was going to give out the hymn. When he had beat for near three quarters of an hour, and saw it did not disturb us, he laid down his drum, and stood to hear for himself, and the tears presently ran down his cheeks. When I had ended, he expressed great sorrow for what he had done to disturb us. As he and some others went up the town, the parson met them, and bade them be sure to come at seven o'clock. He said, " No, Sir; I will never beat the drum to disturb yonder people any more, while breath is in my body." So that we had great peace in our shattered house that night, and God's presence amongst us.

The next day I went to *Hainton*; and when I had done preaching, a grave elderly gentleman came to me, and said, " your doctrine is sound, but it would far better become a church." I said, " Sir, if a man was hungry in the midst of a desert, and wholesome food was brought to him, he would not refuse to eat, because he was not in the dining room." He replied, you are right, you are right. I
thank

thank you kindly; and wish you well, and that much good may be done by you wheresoever you preach, for good food is good, wherever it is eaten."

When I got to *Epworth*, I was told, the clerk was drunk, and had been swearing he would pull down the preacher, and take him to such an alehouse, where the curate and some other men were drinking. In the evening, as I was preaching, he came staggering, and rushed in among the people, crying, "Stand out of my way; for I must have the preacher: he must go before my master, that is in such an alehouse." One asked him where his warrant was? he said he had none, but his master had sent him, and he would make me go with him. The people bid him hold his peace, or get about his business: and when he began to be rude, one took him up in his arms, laid him down upon a dung-hill and there left him.

After I got home, it was much impressed upon me, that some trial was coming upon me; and several times when I was preaching, I have said, "There is a cloud gathering, and it will burst over my head: O, pray for me."

After this, I stayed some time in *Yorkshire*, and sinners were daily turning from their evil ways; so that several alehouse-keepers cursed me to my face, and told me I ought to be transported, for I preached so much hell and damnation, that I terrified the people so, that they durst not drink sixpence with a neighbour.

Some time after, I met a gentleman as I was riding to *Leeds*, who said something about the weather. I said, "The Lord orders all things well." He presently said, "I know you, for I have heard you preach, but I do not like you: you lay a wrong foundation for salvation: do you think that the blood of another man will save me?" I said, *St. Paul* saith, *other foundation can no man lay but Christ Jesus*; but you say that is a wrong foundation: upon what terms do you expect to be saved?" He said,

said, " By good works." I replied " You will be the first that ever got to heaven that way ; But, suppose you could, what would you do when you come there? He said, " What do others do there?" I answered, " They sing glory to God that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever, that was slain, and hath redeemed us by his blood ; but your song will be, *Glory be to myself ; for I have quickened my own soul, and qualified myself for heaven.* O Sir, what a scandalous song will you have to sing ? It will make discord in heaven." He turned pale, and said nothing for some time. When we had rode a while, he said, " All the Lord requires of us is, *To do justice, and to love mercy, and walk humbly with God.*" I said, " Do you expect to stand or fall by that scripture?" He said, " I do;" then I replied, " You are lost for ever, if you are to go to heaven for doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God : I appeal to your conscience, if you have not come short in every one of these duties : have you dealt with every man, as you would have him do to you, in all circumstances ever since you knew good from evil?" Suppose you had, have you dealt justly with God, and employed every talent that he has committed to your charge, to his glory, both time, wisdom, and learning, your house, your land, health, and lawful trade? If you have used any one talent, and not to the glory of God, you have robbed him." Then I spoke of the other two, He said, " There is repentance:" but I replied, " Not for you ; for you are to be saved for doing justly, for loving mercy, and walking humbly with God : if you come short of these duties, you must be damned." He said, " Lord have mercy on me ! you are enough to make any man despair." Yes, I said, of saving himself, that he may come to *Jesus Christ* and be saved." He argued no more ; but heard me patiently, and parted friendly.

One Sunday I was at a chapel, where the minister laboured much to persuade the people that there

was no such thing as the forgiveness of sins in this world ; when he had done, he sent the clerk to desire me to call upon him ; I did so, and he told me, he understood I was he that went about to delude the people, telling them they might know their sins forgiven in this world, and there is no such thing ; he said, he did not know his own sins were forgiven, and he had talked with several learned divines, and there was not one of them that did ; and several believed they must never know it, till the day of judgment. I said, " Sir, what will become of their souls till then, will they lie in heaven or hell ? " He said it was an unfair question. I said, Sir, if what you say be true, every time we use the church prayers, we offer the sacrifice of fools, and mock God to his face : for this day, you and all the congregation, in my presence, prayed that God would forgive you all your sins, negligences, and ignorances : and you affirmed, in the presence of God, that he pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe the gospel ; if he do not, you are a false witness and a deceiver of the people ; yea, and a contemner of the word of God : for St. Peter saith, *To him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him, shall receive forgiveness of their sins.* And St. Paul saith, *By him all that believe are justified from all things.* He doth not say, they shall be justified at the day of judgment, but all that believe are justified. And St. John saith, *I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.*" And he said, You take some part of scripture. I said, " I leave all the rest to you to contradict me if you can. For this day you have denied the faith of the church you call yourself a minister of ; as the faith, before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his holy spirit, no good work can be done. But you say there is no such thing as inspiration to be expected in this age. And yet you prayed, that God would cleanse the thoughts of your hearts by the inspiration of his holy spirit." Then he said, I had
too

too good a memory for him: landlady, bring us a pint of ale; so I left him.

One man in our town, that had run well for a season, but had turned from us, and was become a *happy sinner*, now invited the *Germans* to preach at his house. One of their chief preachers came, and said, (after preaching) they had been asking their Saviour about preaching in *Birfstal*; and the lamb had made it plain to them, the time was come, that they should have a church in *Birfstal*; which one came and told me; I said, "God hath shewed me to the contrary, and you may go and tell the preacher, that lamb that told them so, is a liar." They came several weeks together; but to no purpose. Then the preacher said, it is not the Lamb's will that they should come any more. When they told me, I said, "Their lamb is much given to change: he hath not continued in one mind for three months."

After this, I was going to *Staincliff* to work at my business, about five in the morning; and I met with a dissenting minister; he stopped me, and said, *John*, you often go this way; I would have you come and spend an hour with us, for I want to talk with you;" I said, "I have not an hour to spare, for I go to my work at five in the morning, and work till six at night: then I have always somewhere to go to preach; so that I have scarce time to read a chapter in the bible, but at my dinner hour; and sometimes I have to preach in that hour." He said, "What do you mean by redemption? Do you mean, that Christ hath died for all?" I said, "I do believe he did, or he cannot judge all: for truth itself cannot condemn any man, because he will not believe a lye." "What do you mean?" he said; I said, "Every man is bound to believe that he, by nature, is a child of wrath; and by wilful sin, an heir of hell; and that, while he was in that lost condition, the eternal son of God, for his sake, took upon him our nature; and did in that nature fulfil all righteousness for him, and at the last gave his soul an offering for his

his sins: he must consciously believe, that the Lord Jesus Christ loved him, and gave himself for *him*, or he must be damned eternally. And if the Lord did not give himself for him, he must be damned, because he doth not believe a lie. But you know it is said, he, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man: and he gave himself a ransom for all to be manifest in due season. And St. *John* saith, *He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.* Sir, there are numberless scriptures that say he did die for all; but shew me one that saith he did not die for all." He said, "If he died for all, why are not all saved?" I said, "Let the Lord answer for himself: he saith, *Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life.*" So then he said, "You say it is of him that willeth." I said, it is Christ that saith, *Ye will not come to me.* Do not pretend to be wiser than the Lord that made you. You say you will have no *ifs*: but I say, "If you give the promise without the condition, God will take your name out of the book of life." Sir, I hope you will weigh these things; and I shall be glad to converse with you at some other opportunity, for my time is now expired."

Almost every day some would come to dispute with me as I was at my work. And I saw every day more clearly, that he that insists on men being saved by Christ from their sins, in this world, is like a speckled bird; for all sects and parties, that have not the life of Christ in them, to mock at.

One day two *quakers* fell upon me very hotly, and told me, I was carnal; or else I should not make use of carnal ordinances, nor seek the living among the dead. I told them, those ordinances they called carnal, I knew to be spiritual; for God had refreshed my soul in the use of them by his spirit: "You say I seek the living amongst the dead," but I do not; for I have found the Lord of life in the great congregation; but if I would leave the *church*, where must I go to find a people that are truly alive?

to God. They told me if I was right I should come to them; for they were the only people that had spiritual worship amongst them. And they talked much about *George Fox* and *William Penn*, and said, "What think you of them?" I said, I think well of them; but their graces will profit you nothing, except the same change be wrought in your hearts, as was in them; neither do I see that you are God's people any more than those that go to Church; for the Lord hath set a mark upon his Children, and it will rest on them as long as the world endureth." They said, "What is that mark?" I replied, "They are hated of all men that know not God: For they that live after the Spirit, must be persecuted by those that live after the flesh: I do not see that this is your case, any more than of them that go to church: Your forefathers had that spot of God's children; but you have lost it as much as the church." Then one of them turned pale, and said, "Do you believe that God hath no people in the land but the *Methodists*?" I replied, "I did not say so." He said, "They are the only people that are persecuted now." They then went away seemingly much discontented.

As I was passing through part of *Lancashire*, I found the Lord reviving his work amongst the people. After I had done preaching at one place, a man and his wife came to me, both in tears, and desired me to pray with them: I did so. When I had done, I was exhorting them to abstain from all evil, and to continue in prayer, and told them, God would shew mercy unto them, for the obedience and blood-shedding of his dear Son. Presently a dissenter broke out and said, I was deceiving the people, and setting them to lean on a broken reed, by telling them that another man's obedience and blood would atone for their sins. I asked him how he could stand before that God, that is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, if there was no merit in the blood of Christ to atone for his sins?" He said, "Man has such

noble faculties, that if he improves them, he will thereby qualify himself for heaven ; but you degrade man's nature in your preaching, and set him on a level with the brute beasts." I said, " Did I so ?" He replied, " Yes, you did ; for I heard you myself." I said, " Then, Sir, you heard me preach *false doctrine* : for if I set a natural man upon a level with the beasts, I set him greatly out of his place : I believe he is far worse ; for he hath not only the faculties of the beast, which are *lust* and *earthly mindedness*, but the nature of the devil, *wrath*, *pride*, *malice*, and *ambition*, so that he is three degrees worse than a beast, till he is created a-new in Christ Jesus : so that, if I ranked him among the beasts, I set him above his place." Then he burst out in anger : but I said, " Sir, make use of that noble reason you speak of, and let me see you save yourself from anger." At which he was ready to strike me ; and went away leaving me, as he said, in my stupid condition.

When I got about ten miles farther in the country, another *dissenter* came into a house, where I was at prayer with a poor man. When I had done prayer, I exhorted him not to rest, till he was sure that the Lord Jesus had loved him, and washed him from his sins in his own blood. At which words, the *dissenter* spoke out, saying, " I hate to hear people talk of being assured of any such thing, or of *perfection* in this world." I replied, " Is the Lord of life able to do what he came from heaven to do ?" He said, " What is that ?" I answered, " To destroy the works of the devil, to make an end of sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." He said, " Shall you make me believe, that any man can live without committing sin ?" I said, " I cannot tell whether I can make you believe it or not ; but this I can tell you, by the authority of God's word, that, if you are not saved from your sins here, you must be damned." " Well, he said, I care not what you say ; for no man can live without committing sin one day." I replied, " By your talk, it is as necessary

tary for a man to commit sin, as to eat; for you say, he cannot live without it. Now doth it keep his body or soul alive? Or do you, Sir, believe, that all mankind are to live in sin, and die without perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and so be damned without hope or help?" He said, "No: God forbid." Then I said, "You must believe there is a purgatory, to cleanse the soul in after death. Sir, you and the devil speak one language; for he said to our mother *Eve*, *Did God say, In the day that ye eat thereof, ye shall die? Ye shall not die.* God saith, *The soul that sinneth it shall die*: but you, The souls of all must continue in sin, and yet they shall not die!" He said, "You shock me: if things be as you say, what will become of the greatest part of mankind?" I replied, "Our Lord's word is, *What is that to thee, follow thou me.*" He said, "I cannot but say, you have the scripture on your side: but if you are right, we are sadly wrong. I never did hear one of you in my life; for our minister hath warned us not to hear you: but I am determined to hear you this night." So he did, and thanked me kindly when I had done.

At my return home, I was told, that they were going to press men for his Majesty's service, and that several of the alehouse-keepers and clergymen had agreed to press me for one. And I was advised not to preach for a season, by several of my neighbours: but I told them, "I durst not leave off preaching, for any thing that man could do unto me." They replied, "You should consider that you have a wife and children, and your wife is now big with child; and if you be taken from them, what can the poor woman do, or how must she provide for her children?" I said, "Let God look to that: if wicked men be suffered to take away my life, for calling sinners to the blood of Jesus; the Lord, whose servant I am, will be an husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless. And was I assured, I should be banished or put to death for preaching, and my
my

wife and children beg their bread bare-foot, I dare not leave off: for the words of our Lord pursue me, *He that loveth father or mother, wife, or children, or his own life, more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that would save his life, shall lose it: and he that will lose his life for my sake, shall save it.* Therefore pray for me, but do not tempt me to sin against my own soul."

A few days after I went to *Pudsey*; but when I got there, the people of the house durst not let me preach: they told me the constable had orders to press me, and desired me not to light, but go back directly. I rode down to a public house, where the constable and some others met together, and talked with them, when they told me that it was as the people had said, he had orders to press me; but he said, "I will not; for you do not appear to be a vagrant, and my warrant runs for none but vagrant." Many of the people followed me into the lane, and I sat on horseback, exhorting them to keep close to God by prayer, and the Lord would build the walls of *Jerusalem*, in those troublesome times.

Soon after, I went to preach at *Leeds*. When I got there, I was told that two constables had orders to press me, if I preached that night. I said, "If the people will venture to hear, I dare not but preach;" and immediately I went to the place, where was a large congregation gathered together, to whom I preached; and a blessed season it was. The two constables gave great heed to what was spoken, and never offered to disturb me, or any one of the people; but went away like men that feared God.

I still kept hewing stone in the day time, and preaching every night. One day as I was at work, the same dissenting minister, that had stopped me one morning, came to me, and began to ask me many questions. He seemed offended with my answers, and said, he would have none of my *ifs* and *buts*. I said, "Sir, they are none of mine, they are the words of the Lord Jesus; and who is he, that dare

dare put asunder what the Lord hath joined together?" Then he replied, "Do you think God would cut you off, if you were to commit as great a sin as ever you committed in all your life?" I said, "I believe I should thereby cut myself off from God; for the prophet saith, *Your sins have separated between you and your God*: and God saith, *My people have committed two evils; for they have forsaken me the fountain of living water, and have hewn out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that will hold no water*. Now, Sir, God would not have said, *They have forsaken me*, if they had never been acquainted with him; and I believe, that one of the cisterns which they hewed to themselves, was the opinion you have in your head, that sin would not separate the soul from God." He said, "You do not understand the nature of God's decree; for God doth not look upon sin as sin in the *elect*: he did not behold iniquity in *Jacob*, nor see sin in *Israel*." I said, "No, Sir, he did not; while *Jacob* was upright and God was his glory: at that time, God rejoiced over him, to do him good, with his whole heart, and his whole soul; but when he committed whoredom with the daughters of *Moab*, and began to bow to their idols, then God's anger was kindled against *Israel*, and cut off 24,000 of them in his wrath, even the very people which *Balaam* had pronounced blessed."

Then his brother-in-law, who was by him, began to curse and swear, and lifted up his stick, saying, he could find in his heart to knock me down, and called me a *damned dog*; and said, "Canst thou have the impudence to talk so to a minister? Thou deserveest thy brains beat out." I said, "Sir, here is an evidence of what I said, for you can be angry with me for preaching righteousness by Jesus Christ, but you do not reprove this man for blaspheming the holy name of God." Then they went away, and left me to my work.

A little after, as I was at work, a man came to me, and said, he had called at a public-house for a pint

pint of ale, a little way from *Birstal*, and he heard the landlord offer to lay down *five pounds*, with some that were drinking, that *John Nelson* would be sent for a soldier, before ten days were past; I said, "The will of the Lord be done; if God permit it to be so, this also shall turn to the furtherance of the gospel." He said, "I would have you take care, for evil is determined against you." I replied, "I am not my own, but the Lord's: he that lays hands on me, will burn his own fingers, and God will deliver me after he hath tried me."

Soon after, as I was at my work at another place, three gentlemen came to me; and one of them began to speak strongly against perfection. I gave him no answer. Then another began to talk about building; and said, "Hewing of stone is a fine art." I replied, "Sir, it was a fine art once, when there were 80,000 together, so skilled in the art, that every man's stones were perfectly fitted for the places they were to have in the temple, before they were brought off the mountain; so that when they came to *Jerusalem*, there was not one stroke to strike at them, nor the sound of a tool heard in the building: Sir, you will allow those men to be workmen that needed not to be ashamed; for their work was perfect before it came to *Jerusalem*." The gentleman said, "You are right, you are right; I will never speak against holiness, being perfected in this world again; for certainly that house of God, at *Jerusalem*, was a type of the house eternal in the heavens; and every stone of that must be fitted perfectly for its place in this world, or it must not be admitted into that *New-Jerusalem*. He added, I thank you; and wish that all our preachers may so square their work, after the rule of God's word, that they may not be ashamed when they come to give up their accounts to him that is Lord of the work."

Wherever I went to preach, for ten days together, I was told, that the constables had orders to press me. My answer was, "The will of the Lord be

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answered discreetly

be done ; for the fierceness of man shall turn to his praise.

On Friday, as I was hewing stone, it was in my mind, that trouble was near at hand ; but the words of *Isaiah* were a stay to me ; *I, even I, am he that comforteth you : who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of man that shall die, or of the son of man, which shall be made as grass ; and again it came to me, Fear thou not, for I am with thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God : I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee ; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness : Behold all they that were incensed against thee, shall be ashamed and confounded, they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee shall perish.*

At night I was met, as I was going to *Adwalton*, by one that told me, that the *parson* and *alehouse-keepers* had agreed to press me that night, and to send me away the next morning ; for the commissioners were to sit at *Halifax*, and they would dispatch me before I could get any one to appear in my behalf. And she said, " I would have you turn back : for there is one alehouse-keeper, that swears he will press you, if his arm rot from his shoulder." I said, " I cannot fear ; for God is on my side, and his word hath added strength to my soul this day : and if I fall into the hands of wicked men, God shall be glorified thereby and when he hath proved me in the furnace, he will bring me forth as gold."

Accordingly I went to *Adwalton*, and expounded at *John Booth's* to a well-behaved congregation. When I had done, *Joseph Gibson*, the constable's deputy, (an alehouse-keeper, who found his craft was in danger) pressed me for a soldier. I asked him by whose order ? He said, Several of the inhabitants of the town, who did not like so much preaching : " and by his own talk it appeared, they were these of his own craft, and the clergyman who had agreed together.

He caused me to go to the *White-beart*, whither *Mr. Charlesworth*, and *Mr. Holmes* of *Sikehouse*, and several more, went with us, and *Mr. Charlesworth* offered 500l.

gool. bail for me till the next day : but no bail was to be taken for a *Methodist* (so called). He protested I should go to his house. I made no resistance, but went, and several of our people with us ; and we sang an hymn, and prayed together, and so parted.

Next morning several people came to see me before we went from *Adwalton*. Here I was kept ten hours before the warrant came into his house ; and when the constable came, he said. If he had been there, he would have prevented what *Gibson* had done.

Between eight and nine I went to *Birfal*, to my house ; and after I had changed my cloaths, we set out for *Halifax*. When I was brought before the commissioners, they smiled one at another, as soon as they saw me. They bid the door-keepers not to let any man come in : but Mr. *Thomas Brooks* had got in with me ; and they said, That is one of his converts. - Then they called *Joseph Gibson*, and asked, " How many men have you brought ? " He said, One. " Well, and what have you against him ? " " Why, gentlemen, said he, I have nothing to say against him, but he preaches to the people ; and some of our townsmen don't like so much preaching." They broke out in laughter ; and one of them swore, I was fit to go for a soldier, for there I might have preaching enough. I said to him, " Sir, you ought not to swear." " Well, said they to me, you have no licence to preach, and you shall go for a soldier." Then I said, Sir, I have surely as much right to preach, as you have to swear." He said to the captain, " Captain, is he fit for you ? " Yes, he answered. " Then take him away."

But I said, " Here are several of my honest neighbours ; you ought to give me the liberty of another man, and hear what they say of me, whether I am such an one as the warrant mentions, or no." They answered, " Here is your minister, [one of the commissioners] and he has told us of your character, and we will hear no more." So I found I was condemned before the commissioners saw me.

Then

Then Mr. *Brooks* laid the petitions before them, sent me by neighbouring gentlemen, which testified I had done no evil, but had behaved myself well in my neighbourhood, and had always maintained my family very well: and they desired them to set me at liberty. And Mr. *Brooks* said, "Gentlemen, you see he is not such a man as is mentioned in the warrant." But they bid him hold his peace, and said, "You are one of his pupils, and ought to go with him." He answered, "Why do you not send me then? for you have as much right to send me as him."

Then our minister spoke and said, "Young *Brooks* lives with a woman of the worst character in our town." When I heard him speak against his neighbours such notorious falsehoods as these, I thought it would be to no purpose for Mr. *Brooks* to say any more; so I desired him to be silent. Then they read the papers sent on my behalf; and one of the company asked if he must put them on the file? but the answer to him by several was, "No; for if they be called for, they will make against us."

"So, said I, Gentlemen, I see there is neither law or justice for a man that is called a *Methodist*; but all is lawful that is done against me. I pray God forgive you, for you know not what you do." They answered, "Surely your minister must be a better judge of you than any other man; and he has told us enough of you, and your preaching." "Well, said I, Mr. C——, What do you know of me that is evil? Whom have I defrauded? Or where have I contracted a debt that I cannot pay?" He said, "You have no visible way of getting your living." I answered, "I am as able to get my living with my hands, as any man of my trade in *England* is, and you know it: and had I not been at work yesterday, and all the week before:" but they bid the captain take me away; and he came and said, "We will take you off preaching soon." I answered, "You must first ask my master's leave." But, he said, "We will make you give over." I replied, "It is out of

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your power." Then he thrust me into a corner of the room, and said, I should have company presently.

Afterwards several were brought to the commissioners, and three condemned to go with me, and four or five acquitted. But all had their neighbours to speak for them, except me; for what need was there of any other witness?

Glory be to God on high! He kept my soul all this time in perfect peace; and I could say to him, from my heart,

Whilst thou, O God, art nigh,
My soul disdains to fear;
Sin and Satan I defy,
Still impotently near:
Earth and hell their wars may wage,
Calm I mark their vain design,
Smile to see them idly rage,
Against a child of thine.

Then the captain read the articles of war to us that were condemned, and said, "You hear your doom is death if you disobey us." I answered, "I do not fear the man that can kill me, any more than I do him that can cut down a dogstandard. For I know my life is hid with Christ in God; and he will judge between you and me one day; but I beseech him not to lay this sin to your charge." And to Mr. C—— I said, "Sir, I pray God forgive you, for you have given me such a character, as not another man in *England* will, that knows me."

I was greatly surprized to see men sit on the judgment seat, and drink and swear as they did; and a man that had a commission from God to reprove all that do such things, could hear and see, and yet never speak in God's cause. It made me cry out to the Lord, "Take the matter into thy hand, O God, for righteousness is fallen in the streets, and iniquity bears rule." But I could not hear them swear, but must speak to them, although they mocked at my reproof.

Then we were guarded to *Halifax*; (but the keeper would

would not let us come into his goal) then to the officer's quarters, and kept till six at night ; where *John Rhodes* and *Thomas Charlesworth*, of *Little Gummerfall*, came to see me, and cared for my soul, as if they had been my mother's sons. O, my God, remember them for good, and give them and their houses, and all that wish well to our *Sion*, to rejoice in the gladness of thy people !

At six we set out for *Bradford*, and many of the inhabitants of *Halifax* prayed for me, and wept to see me in the hands of unrighteous and cruel men. But I said, " Fear not : God hath his way in the whirlwind, and he will plead my cause : only pray for me, that my faith fail not."

When we were about half way between *Halifax* and *Bradford*, one of the soldiers said to me, " Sir, I am sorry for you ; for the captain is ordered by the commissioners to put you in the dungeon : but I will speak to him, and if he will let me have the care of you, you shall lie with me ; for the dungeon is a loathsome place as ever I saw." I thanked him for his offer : but when we got to *Bradford*, we were drawn up in the street where the cross did stand, and the captain sent and fetched the keeper of the dungeon, and said, " Take this man, and put him into the dungeon ; and take this other along with you."

—(A poor harmless man, all the cloaths upon whose back were not worth one shilling ; neither did they lay any thing to his charge, when he was ordered for a foldier.)

But when we came to the dungeon door, the soldier, who spoke to me by the way, went to the captain, and said, " Sir, if you will give me charge over *Mr. Nelson*, my life for his, he shall be forth-coming in the morning." But the captain threatened to break his head, if he spoke about me any more.

He came to us before I went down, and I asked him, " Sir, what have I done, that I must go to the dungeon ? If you are afraid of me, that I should run away, set a guard over me in a room, and I will pay

them. He answered, My order is to put you in the dungeon. So I see my Lord's word is fulfilled, *The servant is not above his master.* For those, who were accused of thieving, and great evils which they had done in the neighbourhood, must eat and drink, and lie on feather-beds: but I only desired a little water, and it was refused me by the captain, altho' I had nothing all day, except a little tea in the morning. But my master never sends his servants a warfare at their own charge. He gives strength according to our day. For, when I came into the dungeon, that stunk worse than an hog-stye, or little-house, by reason of the blood and filth, which sink from the butchers who kill over it, my soul was so filled with the love of God, that it was as a paradise to me.

Then could I cry out, O the glorious liberty of the sons of God! And I fell down on my knees, and gave God thanks, that he counted me worthy to be put in a dungeon for the truth's sake; and prayed, that my enemies might be saved from the wrath to come. I think, with as much desire as I could feel for my own mother's children, I wished they were as happy in their own houses, as I was in the dungeon.

About ten, several of the people came to the dungeon door, and brought me some candles, and put me some meat and water in through the hole of the door. When I had eat and drank, I gave God thanks: and we sang hymns almost all night, they without, and I within.

The same night, a man, that lives in *Bradford*, came to the dungeon; and though he was an enemy to the *methodists*, so called, when he smelt the ill savour of the place, he said, "*Humility moves me;*" he went away directly, and about eleven came again, and said, "*I will assure you I am not in your way of thinking; but, for all that, I have been with your captain, and offered 10l. bail for you, and myself as a prisoner, if he would let you lie in a bed,*"
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but all in vain, for I can get nothing of him but bad words. If the justice was in town, I would have gone to him, and would soon have fetched you out: but since it is as it is, I pray God plead your cause." O my God, let not him that would give a cup of cold water to thy servants, lose his reward: but do thou bless him, and bless thy people; I beseech thee to have mercy on our enemies, and let not thy heavy judgments fall upon them; but be thou glorified in their conversion, not in their destruction!

The poor man that was with me, might have starved, if my friends had not brought him meat: for when they had locked us up, they went to their lodgings, and took no more thought of us that night: Here we had not so much as a stone to sit on.

When the man and I were laid down on a little stinking straw, "Pray you, Sir, (said he) are all these your kinsfolk, that they love you so well? I think they are the lovliest people that ever I saw in my life." I answered, "By this you may know that they are Jesus Christ's disciples; for this is the mark he himself has given, whereby all men might know his disciples from the unbelieving world."

At four in the morning, my wife and several more, came to the dungeon, and spoke to me through the hole of the door; and I said, "*Jeremiah's* lot is fallen upon me. Then it came to my remembrance, that when I was about thirteen or fourteen years old, I often thought if God would make me like *Jeremiah*, to stand and speak his words to the people in the streets, as he did, I should not mind who cast dirt at me. And now I am in some measure, treated as he was, for persuading men to flee from the wrath to come."

My wife said, "Fear not, the cause is God's, for which you are here, and he will plead it himself. Therefore be not concerned about me and the children; for he that feeds the young ravens will be mindful of us. He will give you strength for your

day; and after we have suffered a while, he will perfect that which is lacking in our souls, and then bring us where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

So said they all that were with her at the door. I was greatly refreshed by finding my wife so strong in faith, when she was like to be left with two children, and big with child at the same time; and said, "I cannot fear either man or devil, so long as I find the love of God as I do now: for he has cheered my heart as with sweet wine, ever since he suffered me to be cast into prison. O that I may be faithful unto death, and I shall receive the crown of life! For not one word of Jesus shall fall to the ground till all be accomplished."

About five in the morning they took me out, and we were guarded to *Leeds*, and stood in the street till ten. Hundreds flocked to see me. Some said, "It is a shame to send a man for a soldier for speaking the truth; for many of our neighbours that follow the *Methodists*, and were as wicked before as any people in the town, are now like new creatures; for we don't hear an ill word come out of their mouths." Others cried, "I wish they were all hanged out of the way, for they make people go mad: and one cannot get drunk or swear, but every fool must correct us, as if we were to be taught by them. But I hope they will now be brought to naught, for that is one of the worst of them."

As I was standing, a jolly well-dressed woman came up to me, and put her face almost to mine, and said, "Now, *Nelson*, where is thy God: thou saidst at *Shent's* door, as thou was preaching, thou wast no more afraid of his promise failing, than thou wast of dropping thro' the heart of the earth!" I replied, "Look in the 7th chapter of *Micah*, and the 8th and 10th verses."

Just as the church began, I was guarded to the goal, and the others ordered to the ale-house. The goal-keeper here was very civil; for he let my friends come

come in several times to see me. I thought of the *Pilgrim's Progress*: for hundreds of people in the streets stood and looked at me thro' the iron grate; and were ready to fight about me. Several would have given bail for me, if they would let me out; but I was told that an hundred pounds was refused, which was offered by a stranger for me. I am too notorious a criminal to be allowed such favours; for christianity is a crime which the world can never forgive.

At night, I believe, an hundred of our friends were with me in the goal together. We sang an hymn, and prayed, I gave an exhortation, and so parted. But Mr. H. was not willing that I should lie on stinking straw, and sent me a bed to lie on. I find the time is not yet come for me to be hated of all men for Christ's sake. I pray God to give me strength for that day. glory be to his holy name; hitherto his grace is sufficient for me, and I hang upon his promise for strength in my next trials.

At five on Monday morning I was let out of goal; and we marched off for York directly; many of our friends went with us out of the town near three miles; but when I came to take my leave, they mourned as one that had lost his first-born. I spake comfortable words to them, and bid them, "Stand fast, in nothing be terrified by your adversaries; which is to them an evident token of perdition; but to you of salvation, and that of God. So the peace of God be with you all."

We came to York by three, and were brought before several of the officers, at the *Black-swan*, in *Coney-street*, who seemed to rejoice as men that had taken great spoil, and saluted me with many a grievous oath. It brought something to my mind, which I had spoken in the fields to the Lord, when he had broke a great cloud, that was on my soul; through my refusing to preach, when many desired me, and I had time, but consulted with flesh and blood. And *Jonah* like, fled from the presence of the

the Lord, down into a valley near the side of a wood, when God laid his hand on me, and brought my soul into great distress, so that I threw myself on the ground, and requested for death; seeing it more agreeable to flesh and blood, to be a shepherd's dog than a preacher of the gospel: for his hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against him. But at the remembrance of the prophets and apostles, and Christ himself, what contradictions, and tribulation they all met with, the cloud broke, and my soul was so refreshed with the love of God, that I cried out, "My Lord and my God! Now thou hast given me strength, forsake me not; and if thou send me to hell, to preach to devils, I am ready to go."

When I was before these officers, and heard such horrid language, I thought hell could not be much worse than the company I was in. I asked them, "Do you believe there is one God, and that he is a God of truth?" They said, we do. I answered, "I cannot believe you, I tell you plainly." Why so; I replied, "I cannot think that any man of common understanding, who believes that God is true, dares take his name in vain; much less do you believe that God can hear you, when you pray him to damn your souls. Now, suppose God should grant you the damnation you pray for, what miserable wretches would you be? Do you know, that you must one day appear before that God, *who will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain?*"

As I reasoned with them about a future state, they seemed to shrink, as if I had thrown fire at them; but they soon put away the conviction, and said, "You must not preach here, for you are delivered to us for a soldier; and must not talk so to us that are officers." I answered, "There is but one way for you to prevent me." They said, What is that? I replied, "It is to swear no more in my hearing."

Then we were guarded thro' the city; but it was as if hell was moved from beneath to meet me at my coming.

coming. The streets and windows were filled with people, who shouted and huzzaed, as if I had been one that had laid waste the nation. But the Lord made my brow like brass, so that I could look on them as grasshoppers, and pass through the city, as if there had been none in it, but God and me.—O that I may never offend my gracious God, or provoke him to take his loving kindness from me!—Then, tho' I go thro' the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Even now I find his word fulfilled, where he saith, *I will deliver thee from sudden fear, (and from terror; for it shall not come near thee.* Verily thou art a God of truth! O be merciful to this great city, whose streets ring with curses, and turn upon them a pure language, that their souls may be saved, and the enemy disappointed of his hope. I was brought to the guard-house, and the officers cast lots for me, and it was Captain S——'s lot to have me. Then they offered me money, but I refused to take it; and they bid the serjeant hand-luff me, and send me to prison. I was guarded thither by a file of musqueteers, but not hand-cuffed, and kept two nights and part of three days; during which time, I was beset with such cursers and swearers, as could hardly be matched out of hell. So I had work enough, both day and night, to reprove them. I found they could not stand my words, but the most hardened among them shrunk, and wished they could leave it off, and never swear more.

Several of the town's people came and asked me of the doctrine, that the *Methodists* preached; which make their names, said they, to be loathed by all sects and parties in the nation. My answer was, "That same doctrine it is, which made *Jews and Gentiles* conspire against Jesus Christ, who first preached it; and whoever he be, that bears the same testimony, he must meet with the same treatment. Our Lord hath said, *Ye shall be hated of all men for my sake.* And again, *If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.* What! Do you think Christ would be

be found a liar, and all his apostles, who told us of the things that are done in this our day! Nay, verily, heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one word of Christ's shall fall to the ground.

When I had opened the scriptures, and told them the fundamental points of our doctrine, they said one to another, "This people is not what the world represents them; for if this is their doctrine, there is not a man in *England* can contradict them." They offered me strong drink, (but I told them I did not chuse it) wished me out of my enemies' hands, and left me to my company of drunkards and swearers.

I may indeed say, I have fought with beasts at *York*, for so these men live; yet my speaking to them was not in vain; for they did bridle their tongues in my presence, after the first 24 hours. When they did speak any blasphemous words, if I did but turn, and look them in the face, they looked like criminals before the magistrate.

I was a stranger in *York*, not knowing one person in the city.

The next morning I lay on the boards to rest me, and fell asleep, when I dreamt of *Daniel* in the lion's den: I was awaked by one, crying, *Nelson, Nelson*; when I started up, saying, "Who wants me?" That instant, three women came to the door, and brought me some food. They were entire strangers to me, and I to them: "But thou, Lord, carest for me."

On *Tuesday* night, my wife and Sister *Mitchel* came to see me, and found me lying on the boards. I said, "Behold the fruits of the gospel: now you see the word of God is fulfilled, *They lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and he that turneth from evil maketh himself a prey*. But God looks down from heaven, and will plead our cause; fear not.—No, answered they, we do not fear; for our God is as able to deliver now, as he was 1700 years ago. So they took their leave of me that night, wishing me a good repose on my wooden bed; where, thanks be to God, I slept as well as if I had been on a bed of down.

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Next morning they brought me something to eat, and bid me be strong in the Lord, and not fear them that can kill the body only. My heart was rejoiced to see them so stedfast in the faith.

This day a court-martial was held, and I was guarded to it by a file of musqueteers, with their bayonets fixed to their pieces. When I came before the court, they asked, "What is this man's crime?" The answer was, this is the *Methodist* preacher, and he refuses to take money. Then they turned to me, and said, "Sir, you need not find fault with us, for we must obey our orders, which are to make you act as a soldier; for you are delivered to us; and if you have not justice done you, we cannot help it."

My answer was, "I shall not fight; for I cannot bow my knee before the Lord, to pray for a Man, and get up and kill him when I have done; for I know God both hears me speak and sees me act; and I should expect the lot of the hypocrite, if my actions contradict my prayers." Well don't stand preaching to us, said they, for we must make you obey us. Serjeant give him some money; he offered me two shillings, but I refused to take it. They threatened me fore, but I could not fear them at all. Well said they, if you run away, you are as liable to suffer as if you had taken our money. I answered if I cannot be discharged lawfully, I shall not run away; if I do, punish me as you please. Then they ordered the serjeant to go to quarters with me; who took me to the *Wild-man*, in *Petergate*, where the people behaved well to me, though they had eight more quartered upon them. They said, It is a pity you should come among such a wicked crew as these we have; for there are but few like them in the world. They ordered me a room and a bed to myself. Blessed be God, who gives me favour in the sight of the *Egyptians*, who have been so used by those of our own church. These people were professed *papists*, who, I might imagine, would shew no more mercy to a man that preaches salvation by faith, than they would do

to a mad dog ; yet I see it is not the man that makes the christian, but the mind that was in Christ, and whosoever hath this mind in him, he is a christian; let the world call him what they will.

I came to *Margaret Townshend's*, and met with my wife; and sister *Mitchell*, who rejoiced to see my feet once more out of prison: we sang praises to God for his great mercies to me at this time, and passed the afternoon in encouraging each other. Next morning I sent them out of town, and went, as I was ordered, to parade at the *Blue-Boar*, in *Castle-gate*; where the officers ordered Corporal *W* to fetch me a gun and other warlike instruments, and though he seemed to shudder at the task, he was forced to obey; and when he brought them, and was girding them about me, he trembled as if he had the palsy.

I asked why they girt me with these warlike habiliments, for I am a man averse to war, and shall not fight, but under the prince of peace, the captain of my salvation; and the weapons he gives me are not carnal like these. Well, said they, but you must bear these, 'till you can get your discharge. As you put them on me, I answered, "I will bear them as a cross, and use them as far as I can, without defiling my conscience; but that I will not do for any man on earth."

The officers bid them march us off to *Hopwood's moor*, to learn the exercise of a soldier; but Corporal *W* seemed as tender of me as if he had been my own father, and carried the gun for me to the field. But when he came to teach me their exercise, his heart seemed to fail him, and he bid me lay down the gun, and we fell into discourse. I found he had the fear of God before his eyes, and the Lord had shewn him the light of his countenance. But he was as a sparrow alone on the house-top, none cared for his conversation; but they all despised him, because he would not get drunk and swear as they did. O my God, remember him for good always, I beseech thee

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Next day I was ordered to the field, and others must teach me the warlike exercise, who also behaved civilly to me. I had more to see me than all the rest, and it caused the truth to break out the more, and removed prejudice from many. I found the people of *York* looked upon one that is called a *Methodist*, as one that had the plague, and infects all that he comes near; and they blessed God, that none had come to preach there.

But if I was bound, the word of God was not bound; for if any did blaspheme, I reprov'd them, whether rich or poor, and fell into many disputes with them; and God gave me words, such as they could not resist. My discourses had such an effect on them, that they said, they wished Mr. *Wesley* would come and preach there. I gave them several of our little books; so by hearing and reading, they found out the doctrine to be only the plain word of God. And now several attended my coming to the field; not to see me as before, but to ask questions, and to know of the new doctrine (as some were pleased to call it). Surely by all these things shall the gospel be spread. The Lord is in the tempest, and it shall turn to his glory: Satan doth but whet a knife to cut his own throat.

On Sunday the 13th, I went to *Coney-street* church, and the Lord manifested himself to me in great love at the sacrament. At night *Hannah Scolefield* and I, and our brother *Haughton*, from *Manchester*, with two or three more, went out into the fields, thinking to retire: but some had seen us, and told others that we were gone to sing hymns. We had been but a few minutes together, before we had near an hundred to keep us company. We sang two hymns, and I gave them an exhortation: they received my words with meekness, and wished to hear me again.

One day as I was talking to the people, a man came, and feigned himself to be concerned about his soul. As he was coming, it was impressed upon me, that he was a deceiver; and as soon as he approached I said, "You are a wicked man; and Satan hath sent

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you with a lye in your mouth, but God will not be mocked." He went away as one condemned: before he had gone 100 yards, he fell down and broke a limb, and dislocated his shoulder; then he roared like a bear, saying, It was a just judgment from God, fallen on him, and desired me to pray for him.

We went a mile another way; but there were people walking there also, who knew me, and flocked to us, and desired to hear what sort of doctrine it is we preach, which causes all men to hate us. I said, "It is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, which made all men hate him; and ye are sensible our great shepherd said, *Ye shall be hated of all men for my sake*. But they said, This is a christian land, and it is not so now. Well, said I, then you must say the gospel is not an everlasting gospel, or you declare us blest, and almost all the preachers in *England* curst. They said, What, do we point the blessings to you, and the curse to all the rest? We think it the other way. Then, said I, you do not think as Christ spake; for he said, *Blessed are ye, when all men speak evil of you, and hate you for my sake, and the gospel's: rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for so they did to the prophets of old. But woe unto you, when all men speak well of you; for so they spake well of the false prophets*. Upon this they were silent, but wished they could hear me themselves, then they could judge better. By this time a great company was come together, desiring to hear me, and God gave me to speak plain, and to their hearts. When I had done, several of them said, they would go ten miles to hear such another discourse. The prejudice seemed taken out of their minds at a stroke; and they cried, This is the doctrine, which ought to be preached, let men say what they will against it.

As we came back, one of our company said, I wonder the devil cannot perceive, that his striving to suppress the gospel, is like striving to quench the fire by casting oil into it. As God spake, so it is I see this day. His servants are like brands of fire, cast into dry stubble. Surely God will be glorified in
your

your captivity: only let us watch and pray, that the enemy get no advantage over us.

The day following I went, as before, to exercise, when many came to talk with me; some to dispute, and some who earnestly desired to be saved. Among the disputers was a clergyman: I knew him; for I had seen him in his gown three days before. When several, who appeared as gentlemen, disputed hotly against all the power of religion, I shewed them from the articles, homilies, and prayers of our own Church, that those, who spake as they did, were no members of the church of *England*: For to be a real member of *Christ's* church, is to feel Christ in us; to know that he died for his church, and that by his death we are delivered from death eternal: to find that Spirit, which raised him from the dead, raising us from the death of sin, that our bodies may be the undefiled temples of the living God, an holy habitation of God, thro' his Spirit dwelling in us. For as many as have the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Nay, if you know not (I added) that Christ is in you, you are now in a state of reprobation. So, said they, you have condemned us all at a stroke. I answered, I have condemned no man; for I have not spoken my own, but the words of God, as I appeal to your consciences, you that have ever read them.

When they were put to silence, the minister began to explain the Spirit of God out of the world; as what could not be felt or perceived at all, neither was it necessary now we had the scriptures to go by. I said, It is highly necessary, if the scriptures be true; for they tell me, if they have not the Spirit of Christ, I am none of his; and if I am not his, I must belong to the devil: For they two share the world between them.—Besides, if there be no such thing as receiving the Holy Ghost now-a-days, as you say, then he, who repeats the prayers of the Church, offers to God the sacrifice of fools. Here he stormed at me, and called me an *Enthusiast*, and said,

said, To talk of the Spirit was all a delusion. Hold, Sir, I replied, or I shall expose you before the people, which I did not design to do. How could you affirm, before God and the congregation, That you were inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you the office of a deacon; and now testify there is no such thing as being moved by the Holy Ghost? He said, Did I say so? Yes, Sir, I answered, you did, when you received holy orders. He turned pale, spake not ten words more, but went away: I have met him several times since, and he speaks kindly to me.

I had some every day to dispute with me; and every night some to converse with me, who wanted to know the way to *Sion*. The people now cry out, When will Mr. *Wesley* come, for here are thousands in this town would gladly hear him. Indeed I find a great desire in them to know the way of salvation; nay, and they seem willing to be saved God's own way; that is *from* their sins, not *in* them. Surely the Lord will be mindful of them, and give them teachers after his own heart.

The second Sunday I went to church, and my heart was comforted again by the love of God in the sacrament. God, I find, will meet with us in his own ways: O may we never forsake them.

This week I had several of the brethren to see me, and we were comforted together. Our Brother *A/b* brought me some little books, which I gave to the people who came to see me: so that by my speaking, and their reading, many began to be alarmed, and sent for me to their houses, to enquire, How can these things be, which we affirm? For if these things are as you say, and Mr. *Wesley* has here written, then we are not christians. I told them, I would prove these things to be true, both from our own church and from the written word of God; and if, you find you have not these inward marks of faith, such as peace, joy, love, the witness of the spirit, you are no christians yet; but that is no reason why ye should
not

not become such; for Christ has commanded repentance and remission of sins to be preached to every soul in his name; and he doth actually pardon and absolve all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel. Therefore seek, and you shall find; for the truth of God binds him to give to every one that asketh.

The people attended my going to the field all this week; and when I went along the streets, they came out of their houses to stare at me, as if I had been a monster. I have read that they would not suffer them to buy or sell in the city, unless they had the mark of the beast; but here, without his mark we cannot so much as pass the streets. O my God, why is thy servant as a speckled bird in this which is called a christian country? Called after thy most sacred name; which whosoever nameth should depart from iniquity. How is the faithful city become an harlot, and thy people taken captive by the enemy at his will! It is time for thee, Lord, to lay to thine hand, for they have destroyed thy law!

One day this week after my exercise on the moor, there came a gentleman in gold lace, and a minister in disguise, and began asking me questions; which I answered according to the ability God gave me; many flocked round about us to hear, for our dispute was long and hot on their side. I believe we had talked half an hour before I perceived he was a minister; for I took him for a lawyer, and such an one as believed there was no God: For if I spake of the scripture, he threw up his head and called me fool, and bid me hold my nonsense. I said, "That which you call nonsense, I call the highest wisdom." When I spake any thing of the Spirit of God, he heaved his cane at me, as if he would have struck me: But God gave me perfect peace in my soul, and words that made him start, and convinced the bystanders of the truth." He was so enraged that he foamed at the mouth like a horse that is hard rid.

But when I understood that he was a minister, I
said,

said, " Hold, Sir, let me speak a little by your leave. You call yourself a minister of the church of England, do you not? I do. Pray then, Sir, what doctrine do you preach? For you make the word of God of none effect, and you deny all inspiration." He replied, " So I do deny all inspiration." How dare you then pray for the inspiration of God's spirit, when you do not believe there is any such thing? When he had raged a while, he said, I believe you have read the book of *Job*, and made it all your own. I answered, I have need of patience, who have men of such principles as you to talk with, that regard not what they say to provoke one; but I thank God, you have not done it yet. He replied, His reason for speaking so was, because I could not be quiet with my nonsense and inspiration. And, I hear you have preached several times since you came, and have filled the heads of many in this town with your new doctrine. I told him, I had not preached publicly since I came, but did not know how soon I might. Then he shook his stick, stamp, and said in anger, " If you do preach publicly, we shall take an order with you, which shall be worse than sending you for a soldier." Let God look to that, I answered; for by his grace, I can love all men, but fear none, that can kill the body only. I assure you, it is not the fear of man which shall hinder me from preaching: for where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. When he began to be calm a little, I asked him, Sir, Suppose you had been inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel; if the outward ordination was refused you, when you believed yourself called according to the will of Christ to preach, would you forbear preaching? that is, would you obey man or God? I suppose, said he, you think you have put an hard question to me. But, hard or easy, he never answered it; and I cannot remember that ever I saw him since. Just as he went away, he challenged me to go into a room with him; but I said, " I have done fighting, Sir."

On

On Saturday, several desired me to preach on Sunday morning. I told them I should take a walk out to the moor at half an hour after seven. Accordingly I did so, and found thrice as many as I expected, and preached to about 300 well-behaved people, who intreated me to preach again to them at night. I answered some of them, I did not know but I might: yet I gave no public notice: but one told another, and spread it through the city.

I went to the Minster, and heard the Bishop preach, and received the blessed sacrament at his hands. At seven in the evening, I went to the moor, and found an unexpected congregation, I believe 6000 people. But there was nothing prepared for me to stand on, and great part of the soldiers were there almost drunk, and began to quarrel with the people that crouded me; so that I saw there was likely to be mischief done, and prevented it by withdrawing. If I had preached I believe they would have behaved quietly, for they seemed to have a great desire to hear what this doctrine is. I had not the opportunity of satisfying them at this time; but they that heard in the morning told others, and inflamed them the more with a desire to hear for themselves. Several sent for me to their houses, and others came to me; so I see God will work and who shall hinder? Lord, open their understandings that they may know the things which belong to their everlasting peace!

On Monday I heard, that some clergymen were with the officers; and, at night, one of the officers sent for me, and said, "What, you cannot leave off your preaching yet; but we must be blamed about you.—But if ever you preach publicly more, you shall be severely whipped." My answer was, I am not careful in this matter. It is better to obey God than man! I believe it is the will of God that I should preach; and I have not taken man to please in any thing that will offend my God.

With many threats he bid me go, but I made no pro-

promise to obey him, neither did I intend it in this case : for I had promised to go to *Acham*, a village about a mile out of *York* ; the next evening accordingly I went and preached to almost all the inhabitants, in a field. The Lord gave me to speak his word freely, and sent it with power to their hearts : The rock was struck, and the water gushed out. All whom I saw behaved well ; many said they hoped I would come again ; “ For let men say what they will of this people, this is the truth, and so we shall find it one day.”

As I came down the street, an alderman of *York*, and his wife, who had been to hear me, were standing at the gate of his house, and he called to me, and said, “ If you please to accept of a glass of any sort of liquor my house affords, it is at your service ; I said, “ I thank you for your good-will, but I don't care to drink.” Several others offered me to drink, but I took none. They prayed me to come once a week, as long as I stayed in *York*. Lord, be mindful of this people, I beseech thee, and send them those who will preach righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ : and O that they may be found in the wedding garment in that day, when every covering, which is not of thy spirit, will be found as filthy rags before thy pure eyes.

All that week I had company as much as I could tell what to do with. Several desired me to preach on Sunday morning. I did not promise, but went to discourse with about a score, at seven, on the moor : others had a suspicion of my being there, and I believe 200 flocked round me, as soon as they saw me walking, and begged me to preach to them : I told them I stood in *Jeopardy* if I did ; but they answered, We are more in danger than you, for our souls are in danger ; on which it came into my mind that I had freely received, and ought freely to give, wherefore I preached to them, and God was with us of a truth, and the hearts of the people were opened to receive the word in love.

From

From thence I went to sister *Townsend's*, where I found my own brother, and brother *Mitchell*, who came to see me ; and we were comforted together. Our time was short, for I had but half an hour, before I was to answer for what I had done. Somebody had told the ensign that I had been preaching ; so he sent for me and said, D—n your blood, Sir, Have you been preaching this morning ? I told him I had ; on which he swore he would have no preaching nor praying in the regiment. Then said I, “ Sir, You ought to have no swearing nor cursing neither : for surely I have as much right to pray and preach as you have to curse and swear.

He swore again that I should be damnably whipped for what I had done. I answered, Let God look to that, the cause is his. But if you don't leave off your cursing and swearing, it will be worse with you than with me.” Then he said, “ Corporal, put this fellow in prison directly.” The corporal said, “ Sir, I must not carry a man to prison, unless I give in his crime with him.” Well, said he, It is for disobeying orders. So I see an hundred may disobey all the orders of God, and there is no notice taken of them : nor do the common people cry out, hang them out of the way : But if one of a thousand begins to reprove them for sin, they hale him to prison, as if he had killed father or mother. But so it was from the beginning ; for a murderer was preferred before the prince of life.

I was put prisoner just as the church began, and I sent a man to tell my brother, that the word of God was fulfilled. *Behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried ;* and desired their prayers that I might be faithful unto death.— As soon as I was within the prison, my heart was filled with joy unspeakable, and my mouth with praise to my dear Redeemer. This also shall turn to the glory of God ; for several men of good report heard me this morning, and testified that I had spoke the truth ; and they would not (they said) be guilty of sending that man to prison for preaching for all the world.

world. This caused many to come to me, who offered me wine and strong drink. I told them I did not care for any sort of strong liquor; but such as I had, gave I unto them; some little books and the word of God, which he gave me plentifully to speak to them, without respect of any man's person.

Two nights and near three days, I was kept prisoner at this time; during which my soul was as a watered garden; and I could sing praises to God all the day long, for he turned my captivity into joy; and gave me to rest as well on the boards, as if I had been on a bed of down. Now, could I say, God's service is perfect freedom, and I was carried out much in prayer, that my enemies might drink of the same river of peace, which my God gave so largely to me.

Now did I more plainly see the dreadful state of the unconverted than ever before; and thought, if it might be the conversion of my enemies, I could be content that they should tread me under their feet. But God only knows how it would have been had I been so tried: yet thus far he hath helped me, and given me strength for my day: indeed I have found him a God of Truth, as far as I have tried him; and I put forth the hand of my faith, to lay hold of his strength for what he shall next call me to.

On Tuesday I was fetched out, and brought before the major. There were several of the young officers with him, who smiled when I came into the room: for they had been several times to see me in prison, and had sworn I should be severely whipt. But I told them, if they did not repent, and leave off that swearing, they would perish eternally. And I shall be witness against you, and that will be worse than your whipping me for Christ's sake.

Now they seemed to rejoice, as if their words were going to be fulfilled. The major called, *John Nelson*, what was you put in prison for? "For warning people to flee from the wrath to come: I answered; and if this be a crime, I shall commit it again, unless you cut my tongue out: For it is better to die,

die than disobey God." " Well, but if that be all, he replied, this is no crime: for when you have done your duty, I do not care if you preach every night in an house, or any private place out of the town; but I would not have you make any mobs." " That, said I, is far from my design." " Well, said he, you may go home to your quarters, and if I have a convenient time, I will send for you, and hear you myself; for I wish all men were like you." Here my adversaries hung down their heads, and gave off smiling.

As I went to Sister *Townshend's*, I heard that we were to leave *York* on Thursday, at four in the morning, and march to *Sunderland*. I had a great desire to see my wife first; but she did not get my letter soon enough. Many of the people came and said, " We are sorry you are going so soon from *York*; but if you get your liberty, we hope both you and Mr. *Wesley* will come: for we have need of such plain dealing, and thousands in this city would be glad to hear. You see what a populous, wicked place it is: pray do not forget us, but think of us, when you see us not. We expected some of you two or three years ago; but you had no regard for our souls, till God brought you by force. Surely you was not sold hither, but sent for our good; therefore forget us not."

O the tenderness, which this people shewed, and desire for the word of God! It moved me to cry out, Lord, have mercy on them, and let them hear thy gospel, and find it thy power unto salvation: for why should thy people perish for lack of knowledge?

On Thursday morning we stood two hours in the streets, before we set out of town. We marched to *Easingwold* that day, and when we were drawn up in the street, the people perceived me to be the *Methodist* preacher they had read of in the news-papers. They told one another, and flocked about me, as if the soldiers had brought a monster into the town.

When we had staid near an hour in the street, I and five more were balloted at one house, where the people

people were so poor, they had not six seats for us to sit on, nor any beds; so we came back to the officer's quarters, and they ordered four of us to another house.

God gave me to speak plainly to them, and several of their neighbours, who came to see the *Methodist*. And then they said, "If this be the *Methodist* doctrine, we pray God we may have it preached in this town; for hundreds would be glad to hear you.

In the evening the head man of the town came in. He is a profest papist, but a moral honest man, and one who bears a good character in his neighbourhood. He asked me many questions, and God gave me to answer him to his satisfaction. Indeed I never saw a man of his rank so teachable and humble: his gold-lace did not make him above listening to the gospel: he seemed a man of sound reason, as well as liberal education. I spake near an hour, to prove the doctrine of justification by faith, and that both from the old and new testaments: I shewed the truth of that justifying faith, and the necessity of every man's having it, that he may escape the damnation of hell. The word had such effect upon him, that his eyes discovered the tenderness of his heart; and when I had ended, he said, I think no man in his senses would dare to hinder you from instructing sinners in the way of salvation: as for my part, I shall be glad to see you at liberty; and if you get clear of these men, and come again this way, I would have you call on me.

I was amazed to find such a man among the *Papists*, having met very few, either teachers or hearers, of our own church, but what hold papist principles ten times stronger than this man, who calls himself a *Papist*. When he went away, he forced two shillings into my hand, which I would have returned, telling him I received no money, and needed none; but he would not take it again, saying he could afford it, and I might have occasion for it on my journey. O God, be merciful to him, that gives a cup of cold water to thy servants.

Next

Next morning at two, the drum beat for us to march out of town. By eleven on Friday, we got to *Northallerton*; and by twelve settled in quarters. I went into the market-place, and spake to those I found there of the way of salvation; I hope not in vain. Afterwards, as I was sitting alone, there came a shopkeeper, and said, "If I would go to his house, he would give me a glass of any liquor I pleased to drink:" I told him, I did not drink any strong liquor: "Well, but said he, I desire your company, if you please, for half an hour." I went to his house, and drank tea with him and his family, and spake plainly to them: They received my exhortation with thankfulness, and said, We have heard much of you, but never heard any of you before: Several of you have passed thro' this town; and we wonder they have never preached here. If you come again, we hope you will call and see us." I gave them a book, and returned to my quarters.

Next morning at one, the drum beat for us to march, and we got to *Darlington* by nine. Here I was known to several, and by them made known to almost all the town. Many came to my quarters to talk with me; and others sent for me. Whence the famine in our land? I find the people hunger after the word, as if there were no bibles in the nation.

We rested here on Sunday, and I had many to see me. When they heard what our doctrine was, they cried, It is a shame to send a man for a soldier for speaking the truth; for let all men say what they will, this is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the evening, one of the officers came to me, and said, "Well, Sir, Why was you not at Church to-day?" I answered, "I was, Sir, and if you had been there you might have seen me; for I never miss going, when I have an opportunity." "Well, Sir, he added, have you preached since you came hither? Not publicly yet, I replied." He swore he wished I would, that he might punish me severely. But, Sir, (I told him) if you don't repent and leave off

that habit of swearing, you will be worse punished than you are able to punish me. He said, "I will make you mind your firelock, and leave off your preaching." Yes, Sir, I answered, when I leave off speaking."

This was he that put me in prison at *York* for preaching. As *Saul* hunted *David*, so has this man hunted my soul; but I trust the same God that delivered *David* will deliver me from cruel men.

He called for one of the soldiers, and took the cockade out of his hat, putting it in mine, and swore he would make me wear it: this caused a sore temptation to arise in me, to think that an ignorant wicked man should thus torment me in the street, and prison, and I was able to tie his head and heels together. I found an old man's bone in me; but the Lord lifted up a standard when anger was coming in like a flood, else I should have wrung his neck to the ground, and set my foot upon him; which would have brought a reproach upon the gospel, and wounded my own soul; But O! God is good to me, for he shewed me my danger and deliver'd me from it in a moment: Then could I look on him with pity, and pray for him from the ground of my heart.

I gave several books away in this town also; which we left the next morning.

I was much surprized at the good nature of the soldiers in all this march, for I believe twenty offered to carry the gun for me, or any thing else I had. God, I found, supported me wonderfully in all these trials; for I could travel fifteen or twenty miles fasting, as well as those who ate and drank two or three times by the way. Surely man doth not live by bread alone; but the Lord is the strength of *Israel*; the defender of all them that put their trust in him. O God, be thou my guide unto death.

We got to *Durham* by nine on Monday; but, in our way to *Darlington*, we had a river to cross, and were obliged to wade through it. The day was very hot; so that I had sweat much, and caught cold immediately. I found myself much out of order when

we

we got to *Durham*, and desired I might lay down a little. Corporal *W—*. lay down with me, and fell asleep. At twelve I awoke suddenly, as if some man had called me, and said to the corporal, I must go to the market-place directly, for what I know not, neither which way to go to it. Nor I, he said; but I will go with you, and we can enquire the way. Accordingly we did: and just as we got thither my brother *Westell* was enquiring for me among the soldiers. "Well, said Mr. *W—*, I did never see such a thing in all my life, that you should thus awake; and come to meet your friend the minute he came to seek for you.

We were much comforted together: He told me that Mr. *John Wesley* would be at *Durham* soon after four o'clock, I gave God thanks for that news. We went to a common about a mile from the town, and there we met Mr. *W—*, My heart rejoiced to see him; and great reason have I to give God thanks that I ever saw him, who was an instrument in God's hands of plucking me as a brand out of the fire.— And I have found him God's messenger for my good ever since.

We came to the sign of the *Angel*, and had some conversation together. He exhorted me to watch and pray; and did not doubt but my captivity would turn to the glory of God, and furtherance of the gospel. At six I went to answer my call, and Mr. *W.* went into the Minister.

Afterwards I and *Thomas Beard*, my fellow-prisoner, met Mr. *W—* and our brother *Errington*, and went with them to the inn, and staid till nine. Mr. *Wesley* said, "Brother *Nelson*, lose no time; speak and spare not, for God hath work for you to do in every place where your lot is cast: and when you have fulfilled his good pleasure, he will break your bonds in sunder, and we shall rejoice together." When we had prayed together, we commended each other to the grace of God, and so parted in body, not in spirit.

Next morning the drum beat at one, and we were called up in the market-place, and caused to stand

till three, and then marched off for *Sunderland*, which we reached by nine. When we were brought up in the town, I heard several of the inhabitants say, one to another, "That is the *Methodist* mentioned in the news-papers; for his look is not like other men's." O my God, why am I and my fellows become men that are wondered at?

While we stood, a landlord came to us, and said, Sir, I wish you would quarter at my house; for I expect two, and shall be glad to have you for one, and whom you chuse for a comrade. I chose corporal *W—*. and asked for a billet as the man desired, but could not get it: Yet I believe we got the best quarters we could have in *Sunderland*. Thus I see, if we acknowledge God in all our ways, he will direct our paths.

When I went to exercise, many came to see me, and I fell into discourse with them, but could get no hold of them; for they assented and consented to all I said; and were so full of what the world calls good-manners, that all I spake was as written on the sand, though I talked with them several days: Yet some I trust, will be mindful of their everlasting welfare.

On Saturday night I was ordered to stand centry on the Sunday following, but I desired I might stand another day, or pay for my guard. I believe ten men offered to stand for me, but all in vain; for the ensign, who had shewed hatred against me all along, was the officer of the guard that day; and he protested he would make me do it myself. I asked, Sir, what have I done, that I cannot have the same liberty as another man? He answered, You love the church too well; and I will keep you from it, and make them go who do not like to go. Keep me, O my God, from all anger, or ill-will; for this man is set to prove me. I went to the guard-house, and many came to talk with me; but I did not stand centry till six on Monday morning. The ensign saying in the open street, I should not go to church, because I loved it, drew many of the people to me; and

and will turn, I am persuaded, to the furtherance of the gospel.

The week after Mr. *M*—— came. He had heard what the ensign had done, and came to me and asked me how I did; and said, I am informed Mr. *A*—— hindered you from going to church: but I will assure you, you shall not be hindered again as long as you are with us.

I have found something of good in this man ever since I knew him. He will hear reason, and seems to make a conscience both of his words and actions.

I was near an hour in his chamber, and he asked me of the principal points of our doctrine. I made them as plain to him as I could, and he heard me with great candour, and said, he had no fault at all to find with it. He told me, the first time that ever I saw you, I saw you was no vagrant; but it would be a scandal to all who were concerned in sending or receiving such an one; for the act of parliament does not reach such as you: but the rest of the officers said they could not help it, for you was delivered to us as a soldier by the *J*——s, and they are the rogues. No, Sir, I answered, the *J*——s are in no fault, for I was never before one of them yet. He said, "Who sent you then?" I replied, "The commissioners." What evidence had they against you? The accusation against me was, "He preaches to the people; by the constable's deputy: and he also confessed that he knew no other evil of me." Well, but the act of toleration clears you from that being a crime: what, had you no man to speak for you? Yes, several were ready, but none were suffered to do it; neither were the papers regarded, which my honest neighbours and gentlemen sent on my behalf; for one of the commissioners was the parson of our parish, and he was the evidence against me, and they said, They would hear no other.

Nay, said Mr. *M*——, it is no wonder they treated you so, if the priest was concerned; for they have been at the head of all the persecutions for reli-

gion which have been since the world began. I see them so wicked, that I do not mind religion at all, But this is my religion: I believe there is one God, and that Christ his son died for the world; I strive to do honestly to all men; and to do a good turn to the meanest if I can: and I think my religion is better than theirs, who preach one thing and do another; for I have seen so much of them, that I will assure you, I would hear you as soon as any in the land.

He said, he could like to read some of our books; and I made him a present of *An earnest Appeal, The Character of a Methodist*, and the sermon, *Awake thou that sleepest*. He has since told me, that he has read, and likes them well.

This day he procured me a furlow to go to *Newcastle* for seven days; and I found I did not go up without the Lord; for my soul, and those of the people, were refreshed with the love of God: several of the soldiers came to hear me preach, and gave great attention to the things which were spoken. I found great freedom to speak to the children, whom God has called out of the evil world, to serve him in this place. Watch over them, O my God, for good, and be thou their guide unto death.

On Tuesday my time was out to go back, I preached at *Painshie* in the afternoon, to an attentive congregation, and got to *Sunderland* by seven at night. This week I received a letter from Mr. C. W. that the E. of S. had assured the L. H. that I should be set at liberty in a few days. I said, "The Lord hath not forgotten to be gracious, for he hath taken my cause in hand, and it shall turn to his glory; for he alone hath done the work, when all human means had seemed to fail. My enemies cried, We have made his bonds strong, and none can deliver him out of our snare; for we have put it out of the officer's power to discharge him for any price. Lord, I beseech thee, open their eyes, and let them see the snare, which Satan hath laid for their souls, and escape by speedy repentance, and faith in thy blood.

This

This week I was much out of health by the surfeit I got in marching ; but found present ease by being blooded. The week following I was sent for by the captain to the store-house ; and he insisted on my going, though I was so ill. When I came there, he and three more officers came and asked me how I did. I told them ; and they said, Here is a good coat for you to keep you from cold, that you may recover your health. I said, " I have coats enough, if that would do, I need none of yours. They said, they would make me wear it, and all the other cloathing belonging to a soldier. I answered, " You may array me as a man of war, but I shall never fight." They asked, What is your reason ? My answer was, " I cannot see any thing in this world worth fighting for. I want neither its riches nor honours, but the honour that cometh from God only : I regard neither its smiles nor its frowns ; and have no business in it, but to get well out of it."

Then they ordered the sergeant to pull off my coat, and put a red one on me : when he had done it, they turned me round, and rejoiced over me. I said, " You see the scripture cannot be broken, where it saith, *If they do this in the green tree, what will they do in the dry.* What do you mean by that, they asked ? I answered, *The soldiers took Jesus and stripped him, and put a scarlet robe upon him, and mocked him, as you have treated me, his servant, this day, for speaking his words.* He indeed hath the greater condemnation, who delivered me into your hands : but I pray God forgive you all. These words turned their countenance and behaviour towards me, and one of them laboured from that time to find some way for me to be set at liberty.

During my three weeks illness, many of the brethren and sisters from *Newcastle, Biddick, and Painshoe*, came to see me, and God was pleased at that time to give some the knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins ; and to comfort all our hearts with his love. O may we ever keep his commandments,

ments, that we may continue in his love, even as he hath kept his father's commandments, and continued in his love.

On Friday *July 27*, *John Grabam*, of *Sunderland*, came to me with an open letter in his hand, and said, "Come, my friend, I have good news for thee, God hath heard the prayers of his people in thy behalf, and sent thee deliverance; here, read this letter, which the Major hath sent to the captain on thy account." It was on this wise, "I have received an order from the Earl of *S.* to discharge *John Nelson*, who was prest from *Birfal*, in the West Riding of *Yorkshire*: therefore take his arms and cloathing from him which he has received, and let me know if he has had any pay since he came, and send him to me with a furlow." Accordingly I delivered all things I had belonging to them, to *Lieut. M.* who said, He was glad that I was to be released, and wished me well wheresoever I went: I had a furlow given me, and set out in the afternoon with some that were come from *Newcastle* to see me; and got there by seven.

All the society gave God thanks on my behalf, as soon as they saw me; for they had knowledge of my deliverance before I had. Next morning I went to the Major's quarters about nine: when I had waited about an hour, I was ordered to come at half an hour past eleven; I did so, and waited another hour: then the Major called to me, and bid me come at half an hour after two, and he would speak to me: I came again as he ordered me, and when I had staid near an hour, one of the captains called me and said, The major is gone to dine with the mayor of the town, and you will hardly see him to-night; but you will be sure to find him to-morrow morning. I told him, that would not do for me; for my business was not to be done on the sabbath.

Near six in the evening, I saw the major go along the street, and followed him to his lodgings; he said,

said. I have an order from the Lord S— to discharge you. He sent for the Adjutant, and ordered him to bring two printed discharges with him. He came and three more of the officers with him, and filled up the discharge: When he had done, he said, I wish all the men in our regiment would behave as well as Mr. *Nelson* has done since he has been among us, it would be better for us and them too. Then our Lieutenant said, Indeed he has done much good since he came among us; for we have not one third of the cursing and swearing in the regiment, which we had before he came: And he has given me several private exhortations, and some of their books; and I thank him for them, and his advice, for it is good. Then the Major said, “ I wish I had a regiment of such men as he is in all respects, save that one, his refusing to fight; I would not care what enemy I had to meet, or where my lot was cast.— Sir, if you fear God, I said, you have no need to fear any thing else: For they that fear him depart from evil, and seek to do his will, and not their own: They know that in his hands are the issues of life and death; therefore they fear not him that can kill the body only, but him that can destroy both soul and body in hell. And every one that has this fear is truly wise; but he that dares commit sin, his wisdom is the foolishness of folly; for he is pulling destruction on his own head, and fitting himself for the fuel of hell-fire. But he that is wise unto salvation is bold as a lion, and is more noble than to contend for the honor which cometh of men: for having bread to eat, and raiment to put on, he knows that is all this world can afford him. He pities the great ones of the earth, who feeds on husks, and can be content with the empty title of Right Honourable; while, by sin, they debase themselves even down to hell: but by these things the god of this world blinds their eyes, so that very few of them see the way to heaven, as it is pointed out in the word of God.

Well,

“ Well, said the Major, if you are so scrupulous about fighting, what must we do?” I answered ‘ It is your trade, and if you had a better it might be better for you: But somebody, he replied, must fight. I said, If all men lived by faith in the son of God, wars would be at an end.” ‘ That is true, he answered, “ If it was so, we should learn war no more.”

But there is one thing I desire to know of you; tell me, Do you make your sermons ready before you go to preach, or do you speak off hand. “ I do not study what to say, but speak as the spirit of God enables me.” Well said he, I cannot tell what you mean by the spirit of God. “ The more is the pity, I answered, That you should have lived so long in the world, and know nothing of God yet: For we do not know God, but by his own spirit given unto us; and till we have received that spirit, we are without God in the world: and no man can have this gift and not know it; for thus saith the Lord Jesus, *At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father and you in me, and I in you.* So if God be true, we must know that Christ is in us, or we are none of his; for as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the Sons of God; but if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his; he is no christian, no more than a *Turk* or a *Pagan* is, unless he has the same spirit which raised Christ from the dead, to raise him in this world from the death of sin.”

Here one of the captains spake: You said, one day, If we have not the spirit of God, we are dead while we live. Did I so? Yes you did: Then I will prove it; both from the doctrine of the church of *England*, (of which I profess myself a member) and from the word of God. God gave me to speak plainly from both for about twenty minutes; none contradicting me, but they both stood as dumb men.

Then the Major said, Here is such a discharge for you, as I never gave before, but once; and put it into my hand: I told them, “ I have now delivered my

my own soul, and am pure from the blood of you all; for I have not spared either poor or rich, since I came among you, but have set life and death before you all, as you came in my way. I have declared unto you, that the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God; and contrarywise, the blessed state of them that repent, and obey the gospel of Christ our Saviour: and I pray God give you all to understand the things which make for your everlasting peace, and bleis you in turning every one of you from your iniquities: then shall we meet another day to part no more." The Major said, I wish you well wherever you go; for I believe you *Methodists* are a well-meaning people; and so said they all. I gave them a book, and took my leave of them.

I went to the room, and preached that night, and had several of the soldiers to hear me, who gave great attention to what I said: then I took my leave of them; and some of them wept, and desired me to pray for them and said, We are glad you are set at liberty, but sorry to part with you. I commended them to God, and to the word of his grace, and trust they will mind the exhortation, and become soldiers of Jesus Christ.

On the 28th day of *July*, I was set at liberty to go wheresoever I thought was most to God's glory, who has delivered me from my bonds: for he hath done the work, and to him the glory is due. What am I, that he should care for me! But he is a God that heareth prayer; and the cries of his people inclined him to take my cause in hand.—Praise the Lord, O my soul, who has kept thee in all thy trials, and hath not suffered thee to faint in fore temptation.

Now I find the words true which Mr. *John Wesley* first sent me at *York*; "Well, my brother, Is the God whom you serve able to deliver you, and do you find him faithful to his word? Is his grace still sufficient for you? I doubt it not. He will not suffer you to be weary or faint in your mind. But he had work for you to do, which you knew not of, and thus his counsel

counsel was to be fulfilled ! O lose no time ! who knows how many souls God may by this means deliver into your hands. Shall not all these things be for the furtherance of the gospel ? And is not the time coming when we shall cry out together ? "Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us."

On the 29th of *July*, 1744, the day after I was released from my captivity, I preached at the room in *Newcastle*; and the power of the Lord was present, and several were converted that week; and my own soul was much refreshed amongst them.

The week after I set out for home; and brother *Tinckler* assisted me with a horse as far as *Ferry Hill*, where we commended each other to the grace of God, and I set out on foot.

The day after I met brother *Ash*, and two more near *Boroughbridge*; coming to meet me with my mare. We stopped and sang praise together unto God, who had broken my bonds, and preserved them in many dangers.

It was given out for me to preach at *Leeds* that night; and I preached in an open yard, to a large company of rich and poor, that did not attend our preaching before I was sent for a soldier: thus we see that what the enemies of the Lord Jesus do to hinder his gospel, helps to enlarge his kingdom. So it is, that he turns the fierceness of men to his praise and the remainder of it he restrains; for not one in *Leeds* opened his mouth against me, but hundreds said they were glad to see me at liberty again.

When I got home I found my wife and children well, and we praised God together. But when I came to converse with the people, my soul was distressed within me, for those that had shewed great love before I went, by their behaviour and countenance, now seemed to wish I had not come back; for Mr. *Vincy*, who had been with the *Moravians*, had got among them in my absence, and had preached to them another gospel. They now told me, they
did

did not want the law, or work-preaching any more, but that they wanted to be fed ; and that neither Mr. *Wesley* nor I knew how to build up souls as well as Mr. *Viney* did. But I found that they were built up in an unholy faith ; for they said, to tell people that they must be holy in this world, was Mr. *Wesley's* error and mine, and we kept souls in bondage, by preaching as we did : Some of them, indeed, shewed their liberty, by trampling underfoot the law of God and man.

When I saw such havock made among the flock, by his soft words and fair speeches, my soul was distressed within me, so that I could not eat my bread. I threw myself on the ground, and requested for Death, saying, Lord, why hast thou suffered me to come back to see this evil ?

When I preached, many stood like stocks or stones, and others smiled at one another ; so that my preaching was like a feather thrown against a rock, or as water spilt upon the ground, except to a few strangers, who were affected. I said, " Woe is me ! for my children fly from me, as if I had brought the plague among them ! "

I humbled myself before God, and begged for light, that I might know his will ; and I opened the book on these words, *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance ; and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you, that GOD is able of these stones, to raise up children unto Abraham : And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the Tree ; therefore every tree, which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.* I went out and stood upon a table, and preached from these words to a large congregation, who seemed to be as a people that had never heard the gospel before, and there began to be a trembling amongst them, when many fell to the ground, and cried out, " Lord save, or I perish ! " Many came to me weeping, and said, We have been deluded by the *German song* : O pray for us, that God may give us back that tender

conscience which we have lost since you left us. Then Mr. *Viney* went out of the congregation, hanging down his head, and owned us no more; but my soul was revived again, for sinners were converted, and others restored to the simplicity of the gospel, who had been wise above what is written, but some continue to this day in their *happy sinnership*. I met with one of them the other day, so drunk, that he could not keep the cart-road. I asked him, What he thought of himself now, if Death was to seize him in that wretched condition? He said, That he was not afraid to die, for he was as his Saviour would have him to be: and if he would have him to be holy, he would make him so, but he was a *poor sinner*, and he hoped to be so to eternity.—He said, “*You and John Wesley are enemies to the Lamb; for you want people to be holy here: But the Lamb shall have the honour of saving me: I will not offer to save myself like you Pharisees.*” I cried out, “*Lord keep me from that delusion.*”

After some time I went to *York*; and found the seed sown, in my captivity, had sprung up, for nineteen had found peace with God, and twice as many were under convictions, though they had no one to instruct them in my absence: but the little books I left them, viz. the sermon on, *Awake thou that sleepest*, and *Salvation by Faith*, and the extract from the Homilies, and the nature and design of Christianity, had been of great use to them. O what good might be done, if these books were spread thro’ the land!

Soon after, Mr. *Wesley* sent for me to *London*, and I found my soul blessed in speaking to the people; and many came to hear out of curiosity, when they heard it was the man that had been in prison; and several were convinced of the truth they heard.

When I was at *London*, I received a Letter from *Sunderland*, wherein I was desired to go to preach there. Two men that had conversed with me, when I was a captive there, had found the Lord; and they said, That their souls panted for the salvation
of

of their neighbours. So I see God leads the blind, by a way that they know not ; for I thought all that I had said there, was as water spilt on the ground : But the Lord confirms his own word, when we see little outward appearance of it. O how wonderful are thy works, O Lord ! what a great fire is kindled by a little spark in that place ! Now, I see, that the wise man's advise is good : Where he saith, " Sow thy seed in the morning ; and in the evening withhold not thy hand ; for thou knoweth not which shall prosper, this or that."

In my return from *London*, I preached at *Nottingham cross*, to a large congregation ; most of them behaved very well, except a few who had prepared squibs to throw in my face ; but three of them were burnt with the fire that they intended for me, and went away, and left me to finish my discourse quietly. When I had done, there came a serjeant to the cross to me, and fell down on his knees and said, " For the Lord's sake pray for me ; for I came on purpose to pull you down ; but the dread of God fell on me (when I saw those burnt with the squibs that they intended to throw in your face) and your words came as a sword to my heart ; and I am convinced that you are God's servants : I never served either God or my king as I ought to do ; but I hope I shall begin to lead a new life from this hour." This being in the presence of all the people, it seemed to season what I had said to them. As I was preaching, one *Stephen Dickson*, and two more preachers, came and stood a while : They then spoke aloud, and said, Why hear ye him ? for he is as legal and blind as the two *Wesleys* themselves.

When I got home, I found the people in a prosperous way ; and the greatest part of them quite delivered from the *Antinomian* principles, that they had got into my captivity ; and the Lord had increased them in grace and number, to him be the glory given.

Soon after, I went to *Newcastle*, and laboured there about three months, and had an opportunity to visit them at *Sunderland*. I preached upon the cross to

the greatest part of the town, who behaved well, and stood all the time, tho' the snow was eight or nine inches deep. I went there as often as I could; and God visited many with his salvation there, at *Pain-shoe*, and *Biddick*, who blessed God that I had been sent among them. They said, That they would pray for our minister, who was the cause of my coming; for they were more beholden to him than to me; and let him intend what he would, they had reason to bless God in his behalf. So it is evident, God hath his way in the whirlwind, and his path in the great waters.

In my return to *Leeds*, I found that the Lord had greatly blessed the labour of *Jonathan Reeves*, and *John Bennet*; several being converted by their preaching, both there and at *Birstal*.

I was afterwards ordered to *Bristol*. In my way I called at *Nottingham*; and as I was preaching, a mob came into the house, and made a noise, as if they had been in a cock-pit, so that my voice could not be heard for some time. When they were silent, I began to speak, and one of them came behind me, and filled my mouth with dirt out of the channel. I think I never felt myself so near being choked in my life; but when I had got the dirt out I spoke again. The ringleader of them turned about, and said, "Let him alone, for he is right and we are wrong; and if any one of you touch him, I will knock you down." He guarded me to my lodgings, and bore many blows for me: He desired me to pray for him, that he might not rest till he had found peace with God, for he was sure he fought against the truth; but by grace he would do so no more.

I found peace at *Wednesbury*; and several, who had been persecutors, were converted, and were content to bear the reproach of the gospel. O what a good God have we to deal with! It is plain, whoever turn at his reproof, he will pour out his Spirit upon them, and receive them into his family, after all they have done to provoke him,

I found peace at all the places in my way to *Bristol*; and my soul was refreshed among the people in that city. Here, and in part of *Somersetshire*, and *Wiltshire*, I spent four months. Several were awakened at *Poulton*, *Colford*, *Oakley*, *Shepton-Mallet*, *Road*, and *Bearfield*; so God doth work, and none can hinder: though the instruments be ever so weak; if he bid them, a worm shall shake the earth.

While I was in these parts, the rebels entered our land; and many trembled for fear of the approaching calamities, that were expected at their coming, and attended the word and prayer, though they used not to attend before: but after the Lord had put his hook in the rebels' jaws, and turned them back by the way they came, many of them were as careless about their souls as ever.

A little before I left *Bristol*, I received a letter from Mr. *Charles Wesley*, containing only the following words "My brother, you must watch and pray, labour and suffer: my spirit is with you; you will shortly be translated in *Yorkshire*. Farewell." Indeed God made him a true prophet to me; for I see as much strength and pray as ever I did; and I believe that, as long as I am in this howling wilderness, and to exert all my strength, in labouring to persuade sinners to fly from the wrath to come, for I see myself a debtor to all men.

I remember, about eight months before I was pressed for a soldier, Mr. *Charles Wesley* was preaching near my house, in the open street; and said in his preaching, "Before I shall come to preach here again, the devil will be permitted to cast some of you into prison; but that shall turn to the glory of God, and to the furtherance of the gospel." I little thought then that the cloud would burst on my head; but when it did, his words were a support to me in my trials.

When I left *Bristol*, I met with many sufferings: at almost every place where I came to preach, mobs were raised, as if they were determined to kill me, and all God's children, in a kind of thanksgiving,

because the rebels were conquered. O what stupid creatures are men in their carnal state !

When I got to *Nottingham*, I preached to a peaceable congregation. About half an hour after I had done, as I and four or five more were sitting by the fire, the constable, with a mob at his heels, came rushing into the house, and said, Where is the preacher? I said, "I am he, Sir." He replied, "You must go with me before the mayor." I said, "Where is your warrant?" He replied, "My staff is my warrant.—Come, lads, help me; for I will make him go before the mayor." I said, "I am not afraid to go before him; but it is your business to take up that swearer; you hear, there is another that swears, and if you don't take them up, it is in my power to make you pay forty shillings for not doing your duty." He regarded not what I said, but haled me away. When we had got almost to the Mayor's house, a gentleman-like man said, "Constable, where are you going with him?" He said, "To the mayor." He replied, "Pray don't; for the mayor is their friend, and says, he will put any one that disturbs them into the house of correction: therefore carry him before alderman *H——l*, and he will do for him." "Then we must turn another way, said he." But I said, "I insist upon going before the mayor." But he replied, I will make you go where I please. I said, "You told me you must carry me before the mayor: I find you are a strange officer, to encourage swearing and tell lies yourself." Then the mob shouted and cried, "Help us to guard the *methodist*-preacher to the house of correction."

By that time we got to the alderman's house, there were several hundreds gathered together; and when we came there, he said, "Whom have you brought, constable?" To me he said, "I wonder you can't stay in your own places; you might be convinced by this time, that the mob of *Nottingham* will never let you preach quietly in this town." I replied, "I beg pardon, Sir, I did not know before now, that
that

that this town was governed by a mob ; for most such towns are governed by magistrates." He blushed and said, " Do you think that we will protect *Wesley*, and you, a pack of you ? No ; I believe you are the cause of all the commotion that hath been in the land." I replied, " Sir, can you prove that one man that is joined to us did assist the *Pretender*, with either men, money or arms ?" He said, " It hath been observed, that there was always such a preaching, bawling people, before any judgment came upon the land." I replied, " That is the goodness of God towards the people, for sending his messengers to warn them to repent, that they may escape his judgments here, and the torments of the damned hereafter.— Sir, You may as well say, that it was thro' *Jeremiah* that the *Chaldeans* destroyed the temple, and took the inhabitants of *Jerusalem* captives, because he told them it would be so if they did not repent, and turn to God. No, Sir, It is not for praying and preaching, that evil comes on a land, but for swearing and cursing, for drunkenness and debauchery, for oppressing the poor, and loving pleasure more than God ; and for denying the Lord that bought us. These are the people that bring the sword, pestilence, and famine into the land." The constable said, " Do you think we will take warning by such fellows as you." I said, " If you will not, you must feel the blow ; for if there is not a reformation in the land, God will pour out his judgments upon man and beast ; therefore I warn you all to look unto the rod, for it is appointed to them that disobey the gospel." Then the alderman said, " So, so, you must not preach here ; I verily believe you are a good man." Then, he said, " Constable, I will not send this man to the house of correction : I think, as you keep a public house, you may let him lie there to-night ; for he is on his journey." The constable said, " I beg that he may not be at my house." Well then, said he, " He may go to *Mary White's*, where he came from." I spoke a few more words to him, and wished him a good night. He said, " Mr. *Nelson*, I wish you well wherever you go."

When

When I had got into the street, I don't know but there might be a thousand people; but I saw not one that I knew; therefore I went and stood under a lamp that my acquaintance might see me. The alderman came to the door, and said to the constable, "Take care of Mr. *Nelson*, that no one molest him; see him safe to *Mary White's*."—The constable seemed much ashamed, and did as he was ordered. Then the man that advised him to carry me before the alderman, came to me and said, "Thy nimble tongue hath delivered thee at this time." I said, "No, Sir, It is my God who hath the hearts of all men in his hands."

When we got to *Mary White's*, we sung an hymn, and gave praise to God, and prayed for our enemies, and recommended each other to God's care and protection; and we had a comfortable meeting at five the next morning.

When I got home, I found all things in a comfortable way, and the Lord added many to the number of his children that winter, and several died in the triumph of faith. *Wonderful art thou, O Lord, in all thy works: and as thou art in majesty, so art thou in mercy.*

One day I happened to fall in company with a gentleman, that was called one of the chief teachers in *Israel*, who began to ridicule Mr. *John Wesley*, and all that labour with him, saying, "They are a short-sighted ignorant set of people, neither are they willing to be instructed in the truths of the gospel." I said, "Sir I am one of them, and I am open to conviction; shew me our error, and I hope by grace to forsake it." He said, "You all deny the faith delivered to the saints, in denying *election* and *reprobation*." I said, "I do not know that *that* is the faith of the gospel; for the apostle *Paul* saith, *It was not written for Abraham's sake alone, that faith was counted to him for righteousness, but for our sakes, if we believe in him that raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.* I think, therefore, that *this* is the faith of the gospel, That I with my heart believe

believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins, and rose again for my justification ; that he died for me, that his life might be made manifest in my mortal flesh, that I might not live to myself, but to him who died for me : And this faith kindles a flame of love in the heart of those that receive it, to God and every soul of man ; and I would not give a straw for any thing called faith, short of this. The same apostle faith, that his commission to the people and to the Gentiles, was to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God ; that they might receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith in Jesus Christ : But there is not one word of *Reprobation* in his commission ; and if any come to preach another gospel, let him be accursed." He stormed at me, and called me a muddy-headed creature several times.—I said, " My head is muddy, or your doctrine is unclean. If you clear God, and not make him a liar, nor guilty of perjury, nor the author of all sin, then, I may think as you do.—He said, " What do you mean ?" I replied, " He hath said several times, that he is no *respector of persons* ; but you have given him the lie many times, since I came in your company ; and you have made him guilty of perjury ; for he swears by his own life, that he hath *no pleasure in the death of a sinner*. And you have affirmed, That it is God's pleasure, to leave the greatest part of mankind to an unmerciful devil, to govern them here, and to torment them hereafter : Nay you affirm, That it is his good pleasure to damn infants from their mother's womb.—O Sir, beware what you say against the God of love : For you have made him worse than *Moloch* ; by your words, that man is as much doing the will of God, that cuts his father's throat, and he that ravisheth his own mother, as he that feedeth the hungry and cloatheth the naked.—O Sir ! Is this the God that was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself ? No, He is loving to every man, and his mercy is over all his works : And St. *John* saith, *He that loveth is born of*

When I had got into the street, I don't know but there might be a thousand people ; but I saw not one that I knew ; therefore I went and stood under a lamp that my acquaintance might see me. The alderman came to the door, and said to the constable, " Take care of Mr. *Nelson*, that no one molest him ; see him safe to *Mary White's*."—The constable seemed much ashamed, and did as he was ordered. Then the man that advised him to carry me before the alderman, came to me and said, " Thy nimble tongue hath delivered thee at this time." I said, " No, Sir, It is my God who hath the hearts of all men in his hands."

When we got to *Mary White's*, we sung an hymn, and gave praise to God, and prayed for our enemies, and recommended each other to God's care and protection ; and we had a comfortable meeting at five the next morning.

When I got home, I found all things in a comfortable way, and the Lord added many to the number of his children that winter, and several died in the triumph of faith. *Wonderful art thou, O Lord, in all thy works : and as thou art in majesty, so art thou in mercy.*

One day I happened to fall in company with a gentleman, that was called one of the chief teachers in *Israel*, who began to ridicule Mr. *John Wesley*, and all that labour with him, saying, " They are a short-sighted ignorant set of people, neither are they willing to be instructed in the truths of the gospel." I said, " Sir I am one of them, and I am open to conviction ; shew me our error, and I hope by grace to forsake it." He said, " You all deny the faith delivered to the saints, in denying *election* and *reprobation*." I said, " I do not know that *that* is the faith of the gospel ; for the apostle *Paul* saith, *It was not written for Abraham's sake alone, that faith was counted to him for righteousness, but for our sakes, if we believe in him that raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.* I think, therefore, that *this* is the faith of the gospel, That I with my heart believe

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of GOD; and knoweth GOD, for GOD is love." Then he made a noise like a butcher in the Bear-garden. When I could be heard, I said, "Sir, If ever you preach again, I must look upon you either as a fool or knave." He said, "Why so?" I replied, You say the *elect* were chosen from eternity, and the rest set apart for misery; and that the decree cannot be broken; and if you think one of the chosen can be lost for want of preaching, or one of the reprobates can be saved by your preaching, you must be void of reason, and something worse if you believe the thing is fixed, and that preaching will aggravate the torment of the lost, and that the greatest part of your hearers are lost, who help to maintain you as a gentleman, only to increase their damnation." He looked at me with a stern countenance, and said, I was as bad as *Wesley* himself. I replied, "Sir, Why do you find fault? If what you say be true, God hath decreed me to think as I do? And how can I break the decree? He said, "I hate to hear you talk so. Then I answered, "Do you want God to break his decree?" Then he went away in a rage.

Another preacher of the same sort, heard of our dispute, and told me, He would put a question to me, that would drive me from inherent righteousness; viz. "If the white raiment, that those appeared in before the throne of heaven, was not the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ?—I said, "No Sir." But he argued it was. I then said, "It is almost blasphemy, in my opinion, to say so." He said, "What do you mean?" I answered, "The scripture saith, that *They came out of great tribulation; and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb*: I never heard that his life was stained by sin; neither man nor devil could accuse him thereof: His righteousness had no need of washing; it is blasphemy to say that it did; for shame go home and read the scriptures, and you will see, It is the blood of *Jesus Christ* that cleanses from all sin, but
cloaks

cloaks none : when a soul appears in that company, it is not like a dunghill covered with snow, but really pure, and is, by the power of Jesus Christ's spirit, restored to the image of God, in which it was at first created ; and then, and not till then, can it enter in at the gates of the *New Jerusalem*, and join the angels and archangels, and spirits of just men made perfect, to sing an eternal anthem to the *Great Three-one*."—He said, " You shall never make me think as *Wesley* and you do." I replied, " If you don't in this world, you will in the next ; for if you die defiled and unclean, you must be cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone ; so you had better begin now yourself, and advise your hearers to cry out, *Create in me a clean heart ; and renew a right spirit within me, O Lord* : for none but the pure in heart can see God."—He said, " He did not care what I could say, for his salvation was completed when Christ hung on the cross." I replied, " Not so, for he did not repent for you ; you must repent for yourself, or eternally perish, after all he hath done and suffered for you and me ; and if you do not believe, that he died for your sins, and rose again for your justification : nor was he risen again when he hung on the cross, which yet was a necessary part of the work which he came to do : nor was he born again for you, for you must be born again, or you can never enter into the kingdom of heaven ; and be as really made a partaker of the divine nature, as you are a partaker of the human nature by common generation, or you have no more right to call God your father, or heaven your inheritance, than I have to call King George my father, and his throne mine." He said, " You are a strange set of people ;" and left me. O, my God, take the matter into thy own hand, and put a stop to that *antichristian doctrine*, that is spreading as a flood in our land ; and give the people to see the truth as it is in Jesus ; and create such an hungering and thirsting after inward holiness, that
they

they may pant as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, till all that is in them be made holiness to the Lord.

I was in hopes that I had done with that sort of people, but a third came to me soon after in a rage, and said, That I was an enemy to the gospel. I asked, "Wherein, Sir?" He said, "In saying that Christ died for all; and in denying imputed righteousness." I answered, "Faith in Christ is imputed for righteousness, to every soul that believeth; and they are freely forgiven for his sake, received into God's favour and family, and are made partakers of that same spirit, that raised our Lord from the dead; whereby they are enabled to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live a godly, righteous, and sober life, in this present evil world; and to perfect holiness in the fear of God. In the scripture sense, these live not, but Christ liveth in them; and he doth actually destroy the works of the devil, and re-instamp the image of God in the soul; and I read of no other qualification in my bible to fit a soul for God's company." He said, "You are stupid; and so are all they that follow *Wesley*; but I believe as I say, and so do many better men than either he or you." I answered, "If you and all the preachers in *England* were to believe so, I will not give you credit unless the word of God *expressly* says, that Christ did *not* die for all; but it saith several times, that he did die for *all*: but not once that he did *not* die for all: and how you came to be wise above what is written, I know not; neither do I want such wisdom." I added, "Tell me, Sir, did you ever feel the love of God in your own soul? If you did, I appeal to your own conscience, that at that time you found love to every soul of man: now this was not your nature, but the nature of God; and if one drop of the bucket could so swell your soul, what must that ocean be from whence it came? But I cannot help thinking, that you of that principle never knew God, or if you had known him, you have forgotten him; for you make him worse than *Molock*." He fell in a
rage

rage with me. I said, "Be not angry with me, but rather be consistent with yourself; and if I could believe as you do, I would not have so long troubled the people with preaching; for you say, "Not one of them that Christ died for can perish, nor the rest be saved;" Then why do you and I beat the air? For Christ will have his, you say, and the Devil must have his: Therefore let each have their own quietly; and do not torment the poor creatures before the time." He then went away in haste, and sent for arguments to those of his own stamp in *London*, to put a stop to universal redemption and inward holiness; but never yet brought them to me.

Soon after, I met with a *Roman Catholic*, who began to condemn all sects and parties, saying, "They must all perish, that died out of the *pale* of the church; that there was but one true church, and that the church of *Rome* was it." I said, "Whatever the *Church of Rome* is, you do not belong to *CHRIST's* church yet; for you curse and swear, and get drunk and break the sabbath; and while you continue to do so, you belong to the synagogue of Satan." But he said, Their priests had *Peter's* power, and could and would forgive the sins of all that belong to their community. I said, "Not so; for one wicked man cannot forgive another, nor forgive his own sins; no, it is God that is offended, and it is he that is offended that must forgive the offender; one rebel cannot forgive another; it is the King that must forgive both, or both must suffer. You say also, that the wafer is the real body, and the wine the real blood of Christ, after consecration. Then, according to you, whosoever is a partaker of it, hath eternal life abiding in him; but the scripture saith, that *no whoremonger, or drunkard, or blasphemer, hath eternal life abiding in him*: and you know, that many of your church, that are partakers of the *eucharist*, are such. Nay, *St. Paul* tells us, in the 5th chapter of the epistle to the *Galatians*, of seventeen sorts of sinners, that shall not inherit the kingdom of God;

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therefore be not deceived, neither cast away the reason God hath given you. Now bring your water, and set it before a swine, an ape, or a bear, and they will devour it: how then can you dare to say, that it is divine: if it be so, these brutes must be raised up at the last day, as well as you." He gave me bad words; and another of them said, if he might have his will on me, he would have me *boiled in oil*; then left me. Oh, my God, rend away the veil of ignorance from that people, and let all nations see thy salvation!

On my journey to the place, where I was going to preach, I called at a gentleman's house, where was much company; and he insisted I should stay and dine with them. I desired to be excused. He said, "What is your reason? You have time enough on your hands." I replied, "Sir, I don't care to affront you in your own house." "What do you mean?" he said. I answered, "If I affront the gentlemen at your table, it will affront you; and I do not expect to sit at the table to-day, but I shall hear the name of the Lord blasphemed, though there are two clergymen in the company: and if I do, I must reprove them, or carry a guilty conscience home, which I will not do for all you have." He said, "I insist of you to dine with me; and you are welcome to reprove sin; and if I be guilty, reprove me first." I said, "You, Sir, as soon as any one, or I should not love your soul as well as another's."

When we were set down, I had scarce time to eat one morsel, before I had occasion to reprove; for one gentleman was a *Roman Catholic*, and he scarce spoke three words, but one was an oath. I said to the master of the feast, "There is one thing too deep for me; I cannot fathom it." He said, "What is that?" I answered, "When I see a man endowed with reason, and of a liberal education, run himself out of breath for no prize." He said, "What do you mean?" I replied, "When such an one will
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damn his soul with swearing and cursing, it is like running for no prize. If he damn his soul to gratify his vain and foolish desires, he hath a sort of pleasure, though it is brutish; but the other brings neither pleasure nor credit." Then said the gentleman, "Peter swore." I said, "He did so; but when he had done, he went out and wept bitterly; and I do not suppose, he ever swore again.—Sir, I wish you would do as he did." He said, "Well, I own it is not right to swear; but here are some of your clergy (as you call yourself a churchman) that will swear as much as me, when they are hunting." I said, "Sir, I am sorry to hear that; but it will not justify you or me, if we swear, because your priest and my minister will swear." Then another said, "Do you think, that Mr. John Wesley would not swear a vain oath for an hundred pounds?" I answered, "I believe he would not swear a vain oath, to save his neck from the gallows: if I was sure he would, I would turn my back on him for ever." The Roman Catholic said, "I neither care what you nor he saith; for hunt I will, and I have as good a pack of fox dogs as is in the kingdom, and a couple of as good horses to follow them; which do but cost me about two hundred pounds a year, and I can well afford it."—But I said, "Sir, how will you answer for spending two hundred pounds a year, when you come to give an account of your stewardship?" He answered, "It is my own; I am not a steward." I replied, "You are but a steward, Sir; for *the earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; so is the cattle on a thousand hills. He says, The gold is mine, and the silver is mine; and he will say to you, 'Thou hast taken my gold and my silver, and spent it on thy dogs and horses, and fighting cocks, in the room of feeding the hungry, and cloathing the naked, or as being a husband to the widow, or as a father to the fatherless, or as eyes to the blind, or legs to the lame. O, Sir, consider, it is but a little while, before God will say to you, Come, and give an account*

of thy stewardship, for thou must be no longer steward! Then you will wish, all that you have spent in voluptuousness, and vain pleasures, had been given to the poor and needy. Then the two clergymen whispered together; and the whisper went round to the Roman Catholic; and he said, "Why did God make dogs of such a nature, if it was not for gentlemen's diversion?" I answered, "Who dare say, that God made them so?" He said, "Did not God make them?" Yes, Sir, I replied, and you too; but not as you are." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "When God had finished the creation, he pronounced every thing good; and there was no death in any creature. But when sin entered into the world, then death entered into the world by sin: but before man sinned against his Maker, there was nothing in one creature, that would take the life of another: no; the hare would as soon have hunted the hound, as the hound the hare; at that time, the lamb would as soon have killed the lion, as the lion the lamb; and the pigeon the hawk, as the hawk the pigeon. But since the fall, the earth is cursed for man's sins, and every thing that it produces: nay, it is all a curse to man, till it is sanctified to him by prayer. And I don't believe, that you, or any one that is here, go to your knees, to desire God to give his blessing to your undertakings, when you go a hunting, and to enable you to use the hounds and horses to his glory; not believing, that you can do any thing that will please him better." He said, "I have heard, that *Wesley* had taught you the art of reasoning; and I find he has." I replied, "Sir, if you, or any man that is present, can disprove what I say, let them do it now."

After my return to *Leeds*, I went to *Wakefield*, and preached to a small, but serious congregation.

The next morning I set out for *Kirk-Heaton*; and in my way, I called to breakfast with a friend in *Horborough*; but before I had been there half an hour, the house was beset with almost the whole town,

town, men, women, and children, that cried out, with one voice, "Bring him out, that we may put him in the river." I went out to them, and said, "What do you want?" They damned me, and said, "You, you *Methodist* dog." I replied, "What have I done to you; I am not going to preach here now." Then the parson's son swore, "You shall never preach more, for we will drown you in the river this day." And I found that almost the whole town had agreed together, that all the journeymen and apprentices should leave work, as soon as the next preacher came into the town, and put a halter about his neck, and drag him into the river, and drown him, that the town might be quit of them for ever; and the parson's son was the captain of the mob, who had prepared a crazy man to put the halter about my neck; and he stood with one in his hand, and a butcher with a rope to help to hale me along; but while my voice could be heard, they had not power to touch me: then they went to the clerk's house, and got six large hand-bells, and came and rung them round me, so that my voice could not be heard; then the madman, who was above six feet high, put the halter to my throat, but I put my hand between my throat and it, and pushed it back, and the man fell to the ground, as if he had been knocked down with an ax; and the butcher stood trembling and touched me not. The constable then came with his staff in his hand; upon which the mob cried, "Here is the constable; let him come, and he will put the rope on him now; for he will help us." He came to me, and I said, "Are you the constable?" He said, "Yes, I am; and that I will let you know." I said, "I am glad you are come; and I charge you in the king's name to do your office." He said, "What is my office?" I answered, "It is to quell this mob; and to deliver me out of their hands; and if I have done any thing contrary to law, to carry me before a magistrate; and let me be punished by the law." He turned pale; and said, "Where are you going?"

I said, "I was going to the stable to get my horse, but was stopped by this mob." He bid them to be silent; and said, "Follow me." He went to the stable and led out my horse, and held the stirrup, while I got on: he then led him quite through the croud, and bid me go on in the name of the Lord. O, my God! hitherto thou hast helped me!

When I got to my place, we had a comfortable meeting; for the power of the Lord was present to heal; and one that had waited long, was set at liberty; and all praised the Lord on my behalf, for his delivering me from the hands of the ungodly.

I went once more to *York*, in *Passion week*; and preached on *Good Friday*, at *Hepworth moor*, to a serious peaceable people; and gave out to preach there on *Easter Sunday*, at eight in the morning: then I went to a village about three miles from *York*, where I preached to a very large and well-behaved congregation.

On *Easter Sunday* I went to *Hepworth moor*, at the time appointed, and found two companies of people assembled; the one came to hear the word, and the other to mob. After we had sung an hymn, and prayed, I opened my book on these words; *GOD having raised up his son JESUS CHRIST, and sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from your iniquities*; and I went on to prove that this was his business in this present evil world, actually to save all true believers from their sins; and that it was neither sect, party, nor opinion, that made a man a real member of Christ's church; but the real christians are those that are saved from their sins, by Jesus Christ, both from omitting, and committing; and every thing short of this, was not christianity: therefore, I said, "Be not deceived; for whatsoever is defiled; or unclean, cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, but must be cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone: and as this day is kept in the remembrance of God raising his son up to bless us, let every one cry out, "Lord bless me,
and

and turn me from my iniquities." Then a gentleman, a *Papist*, that brought the rebels to mob, cried, "Knock out the brains of that mad dog;" and perfectly gnashed with his teeth. Immediately a shower of stones came, and hit many of the people, and they continued to throw, till not one could stand to hear me; nevertheless, not one stone hit me, though I stood as a mark on the table, when all were fled from me, and I talked to the mob: but when I got down, and was going away, one hit me with a piece of a brick on the back of my head, and I fell flat on my face, and must have lain for some time, had not two men lifted me up; but I could not stand for some time. The blood ran down my back quite into my shoes, and the mob followed me through the city, swearing, that they would kill me, when they had got me out of it. I said unto the Lord, "Lord, thou wast slain without the gate, and thou canst deliver me from the hands of these blood-thirsty men." When I was got over the bridge, a gentleman came and took me by the hand, saying, "What is the matter that you bleed so." Some of the mob answered, "That is but little to what we will do to him." Then the gentleman pulled me into his house; and told the mob if they did not disperse immediately, some of them should be in the castle before an hour was at an end. Then they fled away; and he sent for a surgeon to dress my head.

I lay down a while; and brother *Slaton* came with my horse, and I rode to *Ackham*, where I was to have preached, at five in the afternoon; but just at that time, there came about ten young gentlemen, some in the coach, some on the box, and behind the coach; who began to sing the songs of the drunkards and to throw rotten eggs at the women.

I and two more were in a little field by the house, walking, when there came two big men, one of whom swore, "Here he is; I will kill him if there was not another man alive." I told him that he had not any reason to kill me, for I had done him no wrong;
nor

nor any one in that town. Then he pulled off his hat and wig, and gave them to the other man, saying, "If I do not kill him, I will be damned." Then he came as fiercely at me as he could, with an intent to run his head against the pit of my stomach, but I stepped aside, and he pitched on his head. When he got up, I spoke to him again, and asked him, What I had done amiss to him: he gave me no answer, but ran at me again, and caught hold of the collar of my shirt, which rent in pieces, and he fell down at my feet again: then he got up, and came to me the third time; and as I made no resistance, he threw me down, and leaped with his knees on my belly, several times, till he had beat the breath out of me, and set my head a bleeding again. He then went to the gentlemen, that had hired him and the other to kill me, and said, "Gentlemen, I have killed the preacher; he lies dead in the croft." And then he took one of our friends, and threw him against the corner of a wall, and broke two of his ribs. The parson's brother said, "Well, we will see ourselves; we will not take your word." Upon which, he and about twenty more came to me; but my breath was come again, and I was turned on my face, and lay bleeding on the ground. One of them said: "He will get his death if he lies there awhile." Then they lifted me up, and said, "We will help you into the house." When I could speak, I said, "Your mercy is only to make way for more cruelty; gentlemen, if I have done any thing contrary to the law, let me be punished by the law; I am a subject to King George; and to his law I appeal; and I am willing to go before my Lord Mayor, as he is the King's Magistrate." But they cursed me, and the K—g too, saying, he was as bad as we, or he would have hanged us all like dogs before now. One actually damned him, and said; "If he was here, we would serve him as bad as you."

The parson's brother cursed me, and said, "According to your preaching, you would prove our ministers

ministers to be blind guides, and false prophets; but we will kill you, as fast as you come." One said, "If *Wesley* comes on Tuesday, he shall not live another day in this world." When I was got into the street, they set up an huzza, and a person caught hold of my right hand, and gave me a hasty pluck: at the same time, another struck me on the left side of my head, and knocked me down. As I got up, they knocked me down eight times; and when I lay on the ground, not being able to get up, they took me by the hair of my head, and dragged me upon the stones for near twenty yards, some kicking me on my sides and thighs with their feet, as the others dragged me along; and six of them got on my body and thighs, to tread the Holy Ghost out of me (as they said). Then they let me alone a little while, and said one to another, "We cannot kill him." One said, "I have heard, that a cat hath nine lives; but I think he hath nine score." Another said, "If he has, he shall die this day." A third said, "Where is his horse, for he shall quit the town immediately?" And they said to me, "Order your horse to be brought to you; for you shall go before we leave you." I said, "I will not, for you intend to kill me in private, that you may escape justice; but if you murder me, it shall be in public; and it may be, that the gallows may bring you to repentance, and your souls may be saved from the wrath to come." Then one swore, if I would not go, they would put me in the draw-well; and lifted up the lid of the well, and dragged me towards it; but a woman, big with child, stood by the well, and pushed several of them down, so that they could not get me to it. Then two gentlewomen, that came out of the city, called the gentlemen by their names, that were striving to put me in; who all let me go, and turning to the gentlewomen, they looked as men confounded. In the mean time, some friends got me up, and helped me into the house. Then all the mob set out for the city, singing debauched songs. This was on *Easter-Sunday*.

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I heard one of them say, as he got into the coach, "It is impossible for him to live; and if *John Wesley* come on Tuesday, we will kill him: then we shall be quite rid of the *Methodists* for ever; for no one will dare to come, if they two be killed."

When they were gone, I sent for something to sweat me; and I sweat so violently, that in the morning my shirt was, as if it had been stained with raw beef. But I was not so sore, as I expected; for I set out to meet Mr. *John Wesley*, and was enabled to ride 40 miles that day.

I met him at *Osmotherly*, and heard him preach on a tomb-stone in the church-yard, to a large and serious congregation. I found his word to come with power to my soul, and was constrained to cry out, "O Lord, I will praise thee for thy goodness to me; for thou hast been with me in all my trials; thou hast brought me out of the jaws of death; and though thou didst permit men to ride over my head, and laid afflictions on my loins, yet thou hast brought me through fire and water, into a wealthy place." And indeed in all my persecutions, my soul was kept in peace, so that I neither felt fear nor anger.

So far, Lord, I am thy witness: for thou dost give strength for our day, according to thy word, and grace to help in time of need. O my dear Redeemer, how shall I praise thee as thou oughtest to be praised? O, let my life be a living sacrifice to thee; for it is by thee alone, that I escaped both temporal and eternal death.

When I had told Mr. *Wesley* of the treatment I had met with, he blessed God for my deliverance. However, I advised him not to go to *York* at that time, but to go to *Leeds*: and God blessed his word to many souls at *Leeds* that week.

Thus far I can say, "The Lord is my helper: O, may I never grieve his Spirit; then will he be my guide unto death, and my portion for ever."

This is a plain narrative of the dealings of God and man with me, from my youth to the forty-second year of my natural life.

An



A N

H Y M N.

O For a thousand tongues to sing
My dear Redeemer's praise!
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace!

My gracious master, and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread thro' all the earth abroad,
The honours of thy name.

Jesu, the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the pow'r of cancel'd sin,
He sets the prisoners free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood avail'd for me.

He speaks, and list'ning to his voice,
New life the dead receive;
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe.

Hear him, ye deaf, him praise, ye dumb,
Your loosen'd tongues employ;
Ye blind, behold your Saviour come,
And leap, ye lame, for joy.

Look

Look unto him, ye nations; own
 Your God, ye fallen race;
 Look, and be fav'd thro' faith alone,
 Be justified by grace!

See all your sins on Jesus laid;
 The Lamb of God was slain;
 His soul was once an off'ring made,
 For every soul of man.

Harlots, and publicans, and thieves,
 In holy triumph join!
 Sav'd is the sinner that believes,
 From crimes as great as mine.

Drunkards, and all ye hellish crew,
 Blacken'd with lust and pride:
 Believe the Saviour died for you,
 And feel his blood apply'd.

Awake from guilty nature's sleep,
 And Christ shall give you light;
 Cast all your sins into the deep,
 And set your spirit right.

With me (your chief) ye then shall know,
 Shall feel your sins forgiv'n,
 Anticipate your heav'n below,
 And own that Love is Heaven.

F I N I S.

Reply to Qys 112 & 122

Rockwell Circuit. Mr Martin asks, "Has anything appeared in the Magazine on the Rockwell Circuit?" Yes - in 1880. In a series of articles on Methodism in Kent, the M. S. by A. B. James is fully quoted in an account of Rockwell Circuit. p. 446.